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**Quake aftermath: Christchurch journalists' collective
trauma experience and the implications for their
reporting.**

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Degree of Ph.D in Journalism

by

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Abstract:

On February 22, 2011, Christchurch-based journalists were jolted out of their normal work routine by a large 6.3 magnitude earthquake that killed 185 people, wrecked the city and forced reporters to reappraise their journalism. This study considers how the earthquake affected journalists' relationship to the community, their use of sources and news selection. A theory of collective trauma is used to explain the changes that journalists made to their reporting practice. Specifically, Christchurch journalists had a greater identification and attachment to their audience post-earthquake. Journalists viewed themselves as part of the earthquake story, which prompted them to view sources differently, use those sources differently and see advocacy as a keystone of their news work after the disaster. This study adds to a growing scholarship about journalists and trauma, but focuses on what the event meant for local reporters' choice of sources and news selection rather than measuring rates of psychological distress.

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Introduction

At 12.51pm on February 22, 2011, life changed for the residents of Christchurch in little more than 10 seconds of deafening noise and shaking caused by a shallow magnitude 6.3 earthquake centred just 10 kilometres from the central city. As the earthquake fanned out across Canterbury at three kilometres per second, registering some of the highest levels of ground accelerations recorded, 185 people were left dead and others badly injured. The central city was a dangerous tangle of collapsed buildings and twisted roads, bent further by a slew of large aftershocks. In the city's suburbs, especially in the east, liquefaction bubbled up around ruined homes and essential services - water and power - were out while phone lines struggled with the massive boost in traffic from worried people trying to contact loved ones. More than half the deaths occurred in the six-storey Canterbury Television (CTV) building, which collapsed and caught fire in the quake. Others were killed by falling debris. The Government declared a state of national emergency, which stayed in force until April 30, 2011.

Amid the chaos on February 22, as people were pulled from the rubble and the injured were rushed to help, the city's journalists were among the first on the scene. Reports of the earthquake quickly emerged online, radio and television: within minutes I was contacted by Wellington-based media and asked to comment. At that time Christchurch-based reporters, photographers and camera operators saw death and destruction on a scale not seen in their normal news routine and, for many, ever in their work.

Within minutes of the earthquake reporters faced difficult questions: should they try to find their families and friends? Rush out to record what was happening? Help the injured or remain in "reporting mode"? Natural disasters pose a difficult challenge for

local journalists who share the disaster's effects with those on whom they are reporting. In Christchurch, they have to grapple with the initial news event and its aftermath for months and years as their own homes maybe damaged and family and friends affected. Christchurch journalists were confronted by a situation none had experienced before in their hometown. Although the Canterbury earthquake sequence had started the year before on September 4 with a magnitude 7.1 earthquake none of the tremors up until February 22 had caused death, or injury on such a scale. All the central city newsrooms - including TV3, TVNZ, CTV, Newstalk, Radio New Zealand and The Press - had to be relocated. Journalists, in many instances, knew the injured and dead, and faced the uncomfortable situation of life without essential services alongside the public. Their news coverage was subject to some praise, some criticism and over time has helped to frame the city's recovery. This thesis is not about criticising news practice but rather it considers whether the disaster affected the way in which journalists went about their work.

In the past decade there has been a growing body of academic work focused on how journalists respond psychologically to trauma they experience through their work (Newman, Shapiro and Nelson, 2009, Smith, 2008, Keats and Buchanan, 2009 & 2013). The bulk of academic inquiry on journalists and trauma stems from the American or British experience and, as will be discussed, is mostly focused on assessing rates of psychological distress rather than the impact on their work practices or news selection. A New Zealand perspective on journalists and traumatic disasters will add to a greater understanding of media responses to such events in different countries.

The Dart Centre for Journalism and Trauma has highlighted the need for more research to help build an understanding of how journalists respond to trauma, especially psychologically. However, the cliché of hard-bitten reporters able to shrug off the events they cover lingers on. It is an idea often promulgated in popular entertainment,

newsrooms and by the public but does not help us to understand the impact of traumatic situations on journalists' work. Masse (2011) found that a culture of "machismo" is still prevalent in newsrooms - reporters earn their reputation by doing the tough stories. It is this author's experience, as a working journalist for 15 years in New Zealand and Australia, that while reporters can write and speak openly about the suffering of others they are reticent to do so with regard to their own experiences in front of their peers. However, in times of disaster, for example, the boundaries between recognised professional practices and personal perspectives can be blurred (Newman et al, 2009), thereby altering how journalists view and talk about their work.

The reason for this research can, in part, be encapsulated by a comment from Christchurch-based broadcast journalist Amanda South: "I have lived through what the people whose doors I'm knocking on have lived through ... I was there and I saw what happened and they know that, and I know that, and in some way all of us in Christchurch all share a story that we went through." Succinctly put, Christchurch journalists were caught in the middle of the story they were covering and this study is aimed at finding out what impact this had on their journalism practice. Since that day, as the city has moved from the initial disaster stage of rescue response to slow recovery, journalists have shared the experiences of their audience. Every time another aftershock hit Christchurch - of which more than 14,000 were recorded in the three years after the earthquake - journalists faced the same concerns for their well-being and homes as other residents; the big difference being they also had to deal with earthquake-related issues as a major part of their work.

Normally, journalists follow a structure of well-established routines for gathering the news (Gans, 1979, Tuchman, 1978). From this perspective, at its most extreme, journalists can be reduced to mere cogs helping to keep the news machine ticking over, filling up spaces in newspapers or broadcasts before moving on to the next issue. However, Christchurch journalists who covered the earthquake did not have the luxury

of moving onto the next issue and leaving the previous day's topic behind them. Their work routines were inadequate in the face of the upheaval caused by the earthquake. This research aims to understand how working and living in a disaster area affects journalists' approaches to their news selection and relationships with sources.

Traditionally, as part of their professional training, journalists are encouraged to stay "detached" from events to aid their reporting (McQuail, 2010). A natural disaster, such as the February 22 earthquake, brings into stark relief the pressures that can be placed on journalists and provides an opportunity to see how they adjusted, professionally and personally, and how their relationship with the community was affected. Do journalists, for example, place a greater emphasis on their shared experience with other disaster victims? How self-reflective were they about the event and its impact on their work? Do journalists acknowledge that their work practices changed in any way as a result of the trauma they experienced and shared with their community?

The emotion of a natural disaster on the scale of the February 22 earthquake is difficult to ignore and journalists are unlikely to be immune to what is happening around them. For example, researchers have shown journalists who covered the September 11, 2001, terror attacks in the United States, caught up in the emotion of the moment, conveyed notions of solidarity, national unity and empathy for those involved (Cali, 2002, Kitch, 2003, Ross, 2003). They also framed how the United States mourned the attack and responded politically, which contributed to a narrowing of that response. Nonetheless, that situation differs from the Christchurch earthquake in many ways. For example, few of the journalists who covered September 11 were likely to know those affected. Christchurch, population 367,500, is a relatively small city by international standards, which meant local journalists often encountered people they knew in their quake reporting. Reporters covering September 11 were unlikely to have had their homes affected by the event. A natural disaster like Hurricane Katrina, which hit the United

States in 2005, is more akin to what happened in Christchurch, but again the nature of the event is different. Unlike other natural disasters, for earthquakes there is no warning. In the aftermath, the threat of more shaking continues for years and the recovery is on a similar time scale (Akason, Olafsson, and Sigbjornsson 2006), adding to the pressures journalists face. These stresses exacerbate the trauma of what communities can face in an earthquake disaster.

To consider how experiencing the February 22 earthquake affected journalists who lived in the Christchurch area, this research started with four basic questions:

- 1) How did Christchurch-based journalists cope with an earthquake disaster in their city?
- 2) How did the earthquake affect journalists' news judgement?
- 3) How did the earthquake affect journalists' use of, and attitude to, sources?
- 4) How did the earthquake affect journalists' view of their role in society?

These questions guide this study's assessment of how Christchurch journalists' experience of a disaster affected the way in which they framed their news. Studies on Hurricane Katrina's impact on New Orleans' journalists have taken big steps towards trying to reach a greater understanding of how local reporters are influenced by disaster. Those studies (including Usher, 2009, Brunken 2006, Roberts, 2007 & 2010) will be discussed at greater length in the literature review chapter of this thesis, but briefly, they showed that local reporters took on a greater advocacy role post-disaster for their audience. Yet the major ways of thinking about Katrina journalism prove inadequate for understanding what happened in Christchurch post-earthquake. Instead, this thesis argues that the application of a theory of collective trauma helps to better explain how journalists respond to a disaster. Collective trauma - developed from work by Jeffery Alexander in *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* (2004) and Kai T Erikson's (1978) seminal study on the Buffalo Creek Flood - is discussed in more depth in the next chapter. It recognises that journalists collectively share the experience

of the disaster with their community. But they do this as a “carrier group”, helping to make meaning of the event through their news selection.

The theory suggests journalists’ news selection will be framed in the context of their own disaster experience (they are victims too and central actors in the response); their recognition of a collective suffering and their responsibility to help other people (through their reporting and on a personal level); and the acknowledgement that their orientation or relationship to the community and sources has changed. Journalists are likely to see themselves as closer to their audience and more representative of their needs.

This study, then, explores how Christchurch reporters framed the news in certain ways after February 22, why they did so, and how that is influenced by the journalism-trauma nexus. As such, the study sits within a long tradition of sociological research analysing news production. Journalists, in this tradition, are key actors in society who produce news after a series of complex interactions with the community of which they are a part - via sources, their own colleagues, their personal viewpoints and professional expectations (Tuchman, 1978, Gans, 1979).

Interviews with Christchurch journalists formed the basis for the study. A qualitative research approach was applied to this study’s interview data to see whether the theory of collective trauma can explain the response of Christchurch journalists to the February earthquake. The application of qualitative research methods to interviews is recognised as a valid means of testing theory in media and communications studies (Flick, 2007) and is discussed in the methodology chapter. Alongside the qualitative data a content analysis was conducted of coverage of the earthquake to assess how journalists’ changed their reporting practice - specifically their use of frames and sources. This is discussed in the methodology chapter.

Research goals

The central aim of this research is to increase understanding of how living and working in a disaster zone affects local journalists' approaches to news selection and use of sources. Does their relationship with the community they are in change? Does that have an impact on the journalistic frames they use to write their stories? How do journalists view their role in a post-disaster news landscape?

The research is motivated by a desire to move beyond a purely psychological assessment of trauma's impact on journalists to consider how their earthquake experiences affected their work. A disaster like the Christchurch earthquake provides an opportunity to assess how journalists respond to an event that is outside the experience of daily "routine news". This study, by using a framework of collective trauma, provides a new perspective from valuable work previously done by many scholars on journalists, disasters and trauma. From a collective trauma perspective, journalism practice after a disaster is not just a matter producing news according to well-used routines, but rather reflects the notion that reporters share the experience with their audience, which makes them more self-reflexive about their own work and its impact.

Of course, a thesis need not be restricted to purely academic objectives. In New Zealand, journalism training has not traditionally included a big focus on how to deal with trauma and its impact on professional practices. New Zealand and Australian newsrooms, in which this author has worked, have historically paid lip-service to the consideration that trauma can have consequences for journalists emotionally and at work, and for the kind of news that media outlets report. As such, this study aims to boost understanding among journalists, both in a training situation and in a working newsroom, about how trauma can influence them and what they produce in their news.

Background

The aim of this chapter is to provide an understanding of some of the challenges that Christchurch and its residents faced three years after the February 22, 2011, earthquake. This chapter is not meant as an exhaustive description of the problems that the earthquake created for the city. The key point is that although the disaster happened more than three years ago (this chapter was written in June 2014) the city's residents continued to deal with many issues that emerged from the earthquakes. As such, the earthquake aftermath must be thought of in terms of a process that takes many years to work through, not weeks and months. Christchurch journalists, as residents of the city, are part of the long earthquake recovery process. The chapter begins with a brief discussion of the Canterbury earthquake sequence, which helps to put in context the series of aftershocks that residents faced.

Earthquakes and aftershocks

The Canterbury earthquake sequence started on September 4, 2010, at 4.35am. That 7.1 magnitude quake, though bigger on the Richter scale than the February 22, 2011, shake, was centred 40 kilometres west of Christchurch, at a depth of 10km - further away from the city and deeper than the later event (GeoNet, 2010). Although the ground shaking was violent in September, the distance from the city and the timing - in the middle of the night rather than during the work day - helped prevent any deaths. There were just two serious injuries (Stuff, 2010). The worst damage was suffered by older buildings made of brick and masonry with some walls falling down. In residential homes brick chimneys toppling through roofs created one of the biggest hazards (Te Ara, 2011). Liquefaction, where the earthquake's shaking turned water-saturated layers of sand and silt into a liquid mush, forcing it above ground, hit the worst-affected suburbs, including those close to the coast such as Bexley and Kaiapoi (ibid).

The September earthquake prompted the short-term closure of some parts of the central city while building checks were conducted. The 7.1 quake was followed by a series of strong aftershocks in subsequent days. A violent 4.9 magnitude quake on Boxing Day 2010, centred near Christchurch's central business district, created the most concern and caused the further closure of buildings and retail outlets while checks were carried out (Gorman and Brown, 2010). After the September earthquake Christchurch homeowners could make claims for damage to their properties through the Earthquake Commission - the New Zealand Government's provider of natural disaster insurance for residential property owners. EQC's role would dramatically increase after the February event.

The strongest earthquake measured in the weeks before the February 22 event was a 5.1 aftershock on January 20 at 6am (TV One News, 2011). It is worth noting, then, that Canterbury residents, journalists included, had dealt with five months of unsettling events before the February disaster. The nature of aftershocks is that they can act to reignite feelings of concern and anxiety for residents as recorded in news reports at the time.

The February 22, 2011, earthquake struck in the heart of a working day and closer to the city. The 6.3 magnitude earthquake, which originated in the Port Hills just 9km from the central business district at a shallow depth of 5km, pointed the bulk of its destructive energy at Christchurch (GeoNet, 2011). The level of damage outweighed that caused by the September event, large parts of the central city were closed (and would remain so for more than two years), search and rescue teams were called in to find the dead (185 in total) and scores of injured. Thousands of homes were badly damaged. International help was sent to New Zealand to aid the rescue efforts and clean-up operations. The Government declared a state of national emergency, which lasted two months, to deal with the event. In the city's eastern suburbs liquefaction

(estimated at 200,000 tonnes of silt) created major problems, power was cut and other essential services (sewage/water) were unusable (TV3 News, 2011) for days and in some areas many weeks. In the days after the February quake tens of thousands of people left the city because their homes were uninhabitable and they wanted to escape the stress created by constant aftershocks. Those aftershocks would continue for many months, adding to residents' trauma. In June 2011 and then December of that year the city experienced more earthquakes of magnitude 6. These caused further damage and liquefaction, but did not claim any lives. In February 2014, GeoNet noted that Canterbury had experienced more than 4000 earthquakes with a magnitude above 3 since the 2010 event. Of those, 55 were magnitude five or higher (GeoNet, 2014). On a practical level the aftershock sequence contributed to delays in rebuilding parts of the city as insurers were not willing to commit while there was a high chance of more damaging earthquakes.

Before discussing the rise of powerful Crown agencies post-quake it is also worth noting that the earthquakes have changed Christchurch's landscape in a way that makes other natural disasters more likely. For example, in 2014, the city has been blighted by three major flooding events caused by a combination of heavy rain, higher river beds (due to the quakes) and land subsidence in some areas. These floods have forced residents from their homes and added to a feeling of the city getting no respite from natural events (Quilliam, 2014).

Post-disaster bureaucracy

In the weeks after the February quake Christchurch residents faced dealing with the uncertainty of when the next aftershock would arrive alongside a host of problems, including grieving for those who had died and for a city that had been badly damaged. They wondered whether their homes were safe to live in, where (especially in the

eastern suburbs) they might get clean water, where their workplaces would be based and if they were safe to work in. Many schools were closed. Pupils were forced to travel across the city to share campuses at relatively undamaged sites. Perhaps the greatest challenge was dealing with the changes to “routine life”. For example, three years after the event a bevy of central city roads were closed for underground infrastructure repair, which made for long commuting times for many people (Mathewson, 2014). The aftermath of an earthquake, then, must be thought of in years not days or weeks. As will be discussed in more depth later in this thesis, journalists who lived in the city shared those problems alongside their fellow residents, which raises questions about how that influenced their work.

After the emergency phase of the disaster New Zealand’s and Christchurch’s political leaders grappled with ways to respond to it. Those responses can largely be broken into two key areas - helping homeowners with damage to their properties and rebuilding the central city and its infrastructure. The key agencies involved were EQC for the home repair programme, the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority (Cera) for the rebuild, the Christchurch City Council and the Government.

Legislation was rushed through Parliament to establish Cera after the earthquake. Cera reports directly to Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Cabinet Minister Gerry Brownlee. The authority’s main goal is to guide the city’s recovery and encourage the redevelopment of the central city. Cera oversaw the demolition of more than 1000 central city buildings, which by the start of 2014 was almost complete (TV One News, 2013). The central city lost the bulk of its heritage buildings. Cera created the Central City Development Unit to help deal with the massive issues created by damage in the heart of Christchurch. A blueprint for central city development incorporating precincts that include a cultural hub, a new sports stadium and justice area has been published after work by Cera and the city council. The city council, in a cost-sharing agreement with the Crown, agreed to meet certain costs of the rebuild’s anchor projects in the

central city, including the sports stadium, and the repair of key infrastructure including underground pipes and roads. Because of the complexity of insurance issues post-quake (for example the council will not get the payout it initially expected to repair its assets), the need to deal with individual property owners, who have insurance issues of their own, and damage to underground infrastructure the rebuild of the CBD had yet to start in earnest by the beginning of 2014. Debate in the media has focused on the lack of progress in getting the rebuild under way (McCrone, 2014).

In the months after the earthquake, Cera oversaw the grading of Christchurch land into zones. These zones included those areas of the city where building could take place and those where rebuilds were considered impossible due to the condition of the soil. About 10,000 homeowners zoned red, mostly in eastern suburbs of the city, were encouraged to leave their properties and move elsewhere (Gates 2014). As part of the red zoning of land the Crown made buyout offers to homeowners based on the most recent rateable value of their property. By March 2014 about half of the red-zoned homes had been demolished, creating empty areas in the eastern part of the city (ibid). The house demolition programme was scheduled to be completed by 2015. A group of residents, calling themselves Quake Outcasts, refused to accept the Crown's offer for their land and pursued court action because they did not want to move out of their suburbs. That legal action was ongoing in mid-2014.

Alongside Cera's work EQC has overseen the programme for repairing about 180,000 quake-damaged Christchurch houses. Before the earthquake sequence started EQC had about 20 staff. After the February quake more than 1300 assessors (mostly a mix of registered builders and ex-policeman) visited residents' homes to assess damage. After an assessment EQC determined the estimated value of repairs. Those under \$100,000 would fall into EQC's repair programme, which was contracted out to building firm Fletcher. Those with more than \$100,000 of damage had to deal with EQC and their insurer about whether repairs were possible or a rebuild should take place. About

25,000 houses had over \$100,000 worth of damage (Rennie, 2014). There have been countless media reports since the quakes about residents' anger with EQC, its assessments, subsequent repair work to buildings, and the frustration at delays because of disagreements between insurers and EQC (McCrone, 2014). Many thousands of people, three years after the earthquakes, were still waiting for either repairs or the rebuild of their homes (Rennie, 2014). The repair process itself often requires homeowners to find temporary accommodation while work is carried out. This adds to the long-term impact of the earthquakes on people's lives.

The earthquake recovery process, given the scale of the city's damage, the number of people affected and the complex issues relating to insurance and other matters, has not been a straight-forward process. Journalists, in the past three years, have helped to frame the key issues for the city and its residents. Those issues range from concerns about how the city will pay for its recovery to more human-focused stories relating to the strain that living in unrepaired homes can have on residents.

Social/economic impact

The Canterbury earthquake sequence has created many social and economic issues, not all of which will be traversed in this short section. The aim is to show that disaster-related social and economic issues can persist a long time after the event. Immediately after the disaster the key problems related to the basic welfare of affected residents - the establishment of a national civil defence emergency was meant to meet those needs. Three years later, however, social and economic issues have emerged that create a different set of challenges for residents. In June 2014, Christchurch residents faced the basic stresses of living in a city that was, in parts, a large demolition/construction zone. Whether it was the frustration of long commuting times, a lack of central city facilities or uncertainty linked to their own homes, a rise in stress-related mental health issues have been noted by researchers since the disaster.

Cera has run three annual surveys to measure residents' wellbeing since February 2011. An article in *The Press* newspaper on March 19, 2014 (Greenhill, 2014), noted "secondary stressors" - including insurance woes, living in a damaged environment and loss of recreational facilities - had replaced aftershocks and safety fears as residents' biggest concerns. The change to Christchurch's environment had diminished residents' feeling of wellbeing. That survey noted the emergence of a new group of vulnerable people in Christchurch - middle-aged people who previously lived comfortable lives. The survey found a "significant group of people whose lives are very difficult and frustrating" as a result of the earthquakes.

Research released in February 2014 showed children were also suffering a "stress aftershock" (McCrone, 2014). A team of researchers from the University of Canterbury school of health sciences found that when they compared rates of PTSD among children pre-quake to post-quake there were measurable signs of higher rates of trauma symptoms including anxiety, aggression, withdrawal and concentration difficulties. They ranged from 14 to 21 per cent in different schools. The researchers were concerned that young children could carry around the unprocessed trauma of the earthquakes for years (ibid). Researchers warned that the best way for the community to move on from the earthquakes was to take individual feelings and integrate them into a larger perspective, a common memory of the event. Journalists, this thesis will suggest, help to frame that common understanding.

The pressures created by the earthquakes went beyond that of individual reactions to them. The rebuild itself has created social issues that Christchurch has not faced on such a scale before. For example, the cost of living in the city is on the rise. Both property prices and rental rates have increased as a result of a drop in housing stock and the time gap between the demolition and replacement or repair of homes. The influx of workers from outside the city to help with the rebuild placed more strain on

available housing. *The Press* newspaper and other media outlets have reported the struggle that some families face in finding affordable and suitable accommodation. For example, *The Press* reported in December 2013 that Christchurch mother of two, Nellie Hunt, would live in a tent at a public park because she could not find any accommodation for her family (Carville and Cairns, 2013). In May 2014 Housing Minister Nick Smith told a parliamentary select committee that Christchurch would return to pre-quake housing levels by 2016 (Fox, 2014), which illustrates the long-term nature of the disaster recovery. The Government and Christchurch City Council have agreed to a housing accord to build affordable places for people to live in the city.

The Christchurch City Council's own budget woes have been extensively covered in the news media. The council faced a large funding gap (\$534 million) because its insurance claims would not live up to previously budgeted expectations (Cairns, 2014). As a result some of the repair work to city assets was unlikely to be completed to previously expected standards or there would be some facilities that would not be replaced. Christchurch residents, therefore, faced not having the same standard, or number of public facilities as pre-quake. The council's money problems must be seen in context of the overall cost of the earthquake repair bill. The Canterbury earthquakes were a big natural disaster by international economic standards. The damage equated to 20 per cent of annual gross domestic product. In comparison, Japan's 2011 tsunami was 4 per cent and the United States' 2005 Hurricane Katrina just 1 per cent (McCrone, 2014). The Government estimated the actual cost of repairing the city at \$40 billion in 2013 – the repair bill will be split between the private (insurers) and public purse (the Government and city council) (National Business Review, 2013). Prime Minister John Key said of the rebuild (ibid): "This is the largest and most complex, single economic project in New Zealand's history. The scale of the rebuild is unprecedented."

Summary

At the time of writing this chapter Christchurch faced the task of resolving many problems that were linked to the February 22 disaster. Although the aftershock sequence had abated, in June 2014 the central city rebuild was only just starting to pick up pace, a good part of the city's infrastructure still required repair, many residents faced uncertainty about their own homes and the stresses created by the disaster lingered on. Although this brief overview focused on some of the problems linked to the earthquakes it should be noted that many people have responded positively to the challenges posed by the disaster. New businesses and ways of doing things have emerged in the city that would have been unlikely without the change associated with the disaster. However, there is little doubt that in June 2014 Christchurch faced many more years of earthquake recovery. Journalists can be viewed as holding a privileged position in the recovery process as they help to frame the issues that are important to the city and its residents, which will be discussed at greater length in the literature review.

Literature review

A case study of the February 22 Canterbury earthquake provides a unique opportunity to consider how a traumatic event affects journalists' news selection, relationship to sources and their perception of their role in society.¹ At 12.51 that day, Christchurch journalists were thrown into a pivotal role in helping a city and country respond to an event that tested their personal and professional fortitude.

During a disaster on the scale of the Christchurch earthquake the mass media are still the only institutions that can disseminate large amounts of packaged information (Graber 1984). Journalists' stories, therefore, are central to the public's understanding of what has happened and how to respond. Newman, Shapiro and Nelson (2009: 291) note: "In a disaster, no sector of civil society bears more responsibility than the news media. Before, during, and after a disaster, news media are the essential vehicle for public perception of risk, preparedness, scope of disaster, the impact on victims and survivors, and lines of accountability."

A local journalist's role, however, goes beyond a purely functional one of transmitting disaster information messages. They must decide what to report within the context of an event that threatens the community and society in which they are a part. In traumatic events, journalists respond in a way akin to emergency workers and are not immune from the scenes happening around them (Morrison 1994: 306). According to Long (2013: 2) journalists, like emergency responders, can see violence and devastation. "Yet unlike emergency workers, their role is primarily to enlighten and educate consumers of news - to bear witness to the events so as to inform others."

Reporters who live in the disaster area, more importantly, are participants in the event that they are writing about - they, their families, friends, homes and lives are affected

¹ For the purpose of this study journalist and reporter will be used interchangeably to mean professionally employed journalists, photographers, television camera operators and news editors.

to the same degree as the people they are writing stories about. For example, as detailed later in the thesis, many Christchurch journalists' first thought after the initial shake on February 22nd, after getting over their own initial shock at the violence of the tremor and escaping to relative safety, was not about reporting the event but concern for their families and friends. In such circumstances journalists will experience their own individual trauma - not just from what they see on the job including horrific injury, death, destruction and grief that accompanies such work, but also in their personal lives - which forms part of a collective community experience.

Thus, the community's trauma is something journalists relate to on a personal and emotional level that is not necessarily evident in more routine news events where journalists effectively stand apart from what is happening or have a well-defined role including sport, business or political reporter. Hanusch (2010:94) contends the field of trauma and journalism is still young "and little is known about the complicated ways in which traumatic events affect journalists' decision-making". This study is focused on reaching a greater understanding of how journalists' news judgement, relationship to sources and their perception of their role in society are affected in a traumatic event. The study's importance stems from the recognition that journalists play a significant role in helping the public understand disaster events through their news narratives.

A key part of this research is a consideration of local journalists' relationship to their community and how that changed in a traumatic disaster. This literature review will argue that extant frameworks for considering responses of journalists to disasters are inadequate for the February 22 earthquake and possibly more generally. This study argues in particular for a new understanding of news selection post-disaster based on a theoretical framework of collective trauma, which has been adapted from work by trauma theorists, including Jeffery Alexander (2004) and Kai T Erikson (1978). Local journalists are central actors in a community's attempt to understand a collective trauma experience. Underpinning the theory of collective trauma is a "shared

experience’’ between journalists and the public. That shared experience places journalists within a web of interactions with the event itself and the public.

One of the main issues for investigation is whether local journalists develop a sense of commonality with the people (and issues) they are writing about because they have a greater understanding of their shared experience. A sense of commonality will likely affect notions of journalistic detachment - for example it’s harder to be detached when you report on someone’s loss of their house in an earthquake when your own is also destroyed. Nor is it easy to report on those who have died when you personally know victims of the incident. In a city as small as Christchurch that feeling of shared experience is likely to be amplified for journalists who find themselves reporting on people they know personally.

The sharing of a traumatic experience will be reflected by the journalistic frames used by reporters, and change reporters’ relationships with, and use of, sources. Journalists become part of the disaster story and the impact of their trauma experience on traditional New Zealand journalistic norms, including striving for a traditional notion of objectivity, is worth considering in light of the Christchurch earthquake. From a wider perspective, the difference between journalists covering a disaster in their hometown and outside media covering the event may in some part also be explained by a lack of “shared experience’’ on the part of those parachuting in to cover the crisis.

There is a dearth of research about New Zealand journalists’ experience of reporting traumatic news and none on how that trauma affects their news selection. Hollings’ (2005) study of ethical issues for Kiwi journalists covering the Asian tsunami is an exception, but obviously it did not investigate local journalists’ reaction to the disaster. Theunissen and Mersham (2011) studied the national media’s role in reflecting and constructing national grief after the Christchurch earthquake, but did not ask local journalists about how the event affected them and their work. Local journalists, for

example, this study will show, view those reporters arriving from outside the area differently because they are not part of the collective that experienced the disaster.

In order to study how collective trauma affects news practices, the way decision-making takes place during times of “routine news” needs to be discussed. By considering news selection in times of “routine news” the study can mark out the difference with extraordinary news events, such as disasters, and explain why a new theoretical approach is required. The survey of news selection research will be followed by a discussion of journalists’ use of sources and their influence on news selection, journalists’ role in a disaster and the findings of scholarship investigating the journalism-trauma nexus, and will conclude by introducing the theory of collective trauma in detail.

The format for this chapter has been designed to traverse the journey from broad theories of news content to an account of how this study fits within, and adds to, that scholarship. The aim is to mark out this study and its theoretical approach from other academic work, to draw on conceptual approaches to journalism practice and to situate this analysis within the wider literature on journalism.

News selection

The question of how journalists make news decisions has long been the subject of debate from scholars and practitioners. This chapter will move steadily away from a mechanistic approach of understanding news selection by considering how news is chosen, how journalists respond to events and how they relate to the society of which they are a part. Since Walter Lippmann (1922) first suggested the link between editorial selection and public opinion, scholars have tried to dissect the process of reporting news, often finding their conclusions at odds with how journalists view their work.

For working journalists, notions of news judgement can focus on a reporter's "nose" for a good story - a skill seemingly based on an inbuilt news radar that guides the best "news hounds" to select their stories. Reporters can often be considered good, bad or indifferent at their work according to notions of who has the best antennae for a news story. Journalists will often link their understanding of news judgement to an interpretation of what they think is important to their audience. As a journalist this author was constantly guided by the seemingly simple question: why should the reader care? However, much time can be spent discussing the reasons for and against placing stories on different pages of a paper or their ranking for a news broadcast. To reporters "the production of news is a self-evident practice" (Hjarvard, 2002) largely backed by the application of commonsense decisions ranking the importance of issues or events of the day (O'Neill & Harcup, 2009). Ettema and Glasser (1989) conclude journalists' knowledge of news is based on commonsensical practical knowledge - in other words the practice of journalism goes beyond a shared cognitive skill, but involves a learned and considered response to society and its issues. From this perspective social practice is a key to how journalists operate. This approach is probably more akin to how working journalists will view their work, applying their skills, knowledge and understanding of events to determine what is news and what is not. Meadows and Ewart (2001) contend that reporters get their cues for news selection from their managers rather than their wider audience. But this can be overstated - media must still make news decisions according to an understanding of their audience and market. In a disaster, managers may not have contact with journalists to provide clear direction.

Other scholars, meanwhile, have placed developing theories of news production at the centre of communications research in an attempt to explain a "highly complex phenomenon" (Donsbach, 2004). Studies on a macro level have tried to explain news selection in terms of individual, institutional and societal factors. Academic

researchers employ different methods to assess news content and can offer a myriad of answers about what influences news selection (Archetti, 2007).

Broadly, the study of news production can be split into two primary research perspectives – selection and construction. Initial research in the selection tradition views journalists as gatekeepers who decide what information to let pass through “the gate” to become news items. David Manning White’s (1950) seminal study on gatekeeping found news selection was a subjective process linked to individual editorial preferences. In the intervening years many scholars have noted that White’s theory of gatekeeping is simplistic and does not help explain a range of factors that can influence journalistic decision making (Hjarvard, 2002). Schudson (1997:9) notes that while gatekeeping is a useful metaphor, its main fault is that “it leaves information sociologically untouched, a pristine material that comes to the gate already prepared”. Instead he argues news gatekeeping involves a process of constructing reality that reflects the interactions journalists have with their professional colleagues, sources and society.

Gatekeeping research is particularly inadequate for studying disaster coverage. Quarantelli (1975), a pioneer in the disaster research field, has found that in disasters the media’s “gatekeeping is truncated” - the news process is simplified and information is provided to the public without the usual editing and checking processes. In a 24-hour news cycle and with the rise of online media this is no doubt the case as news reports can be filed instantaneously to a website. However, the case for gatekeeping fails to recognise the interactions journalists have with events, people and society at large before news selection. The model also takes a “simple view of the supply of news” (McQuail, 2010). In a natural disaster, for example, journalists are unlikely to be passively waiting for information to arrive at the news decision gate. Rather, their initial selection is influenced by the nature of the disaster itself, their traumatic experience and their links to the affected community.

News values, news factors or news criteria are closely linked to the practice of gatekeeping. Palmer (2001) defines news values as a system of criteria used to make decisions about the inclusion and exclusion of material. News values, then, are the tools for deciding what to let through the gate and offer an alternative to the reliance on subjective individual judgement (McQuail 2010). Accordingly, the more news values a story contains the more likely it is to be published or broadcast.

Galtung and Ruge's (1965) study of why the media in Norway chose to cover some foreign events and not others launched the field of news value research (O'Neill, Harcup 2009). Galtung and Ruge identified 12 factors to explain how events become news. Those factors, which have been explained at length in many academic works, (O'Neil & Harcup, 2009, Hjarvard, 2002, McQuail, 2010, Brighton and Foy, 2007, Gans, 1979) comprise, in simplified terms, frequency, threshold, unambiguity, meaningfulness, consonance, unexpectedness, continuity, composition, reference to elite nations, reference to elite people, reference to persons and reference to something negative. Bell (1991) suggested the values of competition, predictability and prefabrication. According to Bell, as profit-making firms, media outlets are in competition, so report exclusive stories and related issues as major stories. Journalists rely on predictable events such as those in prepared media releases because they provide a steady supply of news and thus have a greater chance of publication.

Since the publication of Galtung and Ruge's work a slew of news value lists have emerged as a means of explaining news selection. Some of these lists follow the original formulation while others do not. Gans (1979), in his classic study of news production, identified "enduring values" that underpin American reporting - and arguably reflected dominant values held by society. Those enduring values included ethnocentrism (countries value their own news above others); altruistic democracy (politics should follow a course based on public interest and service); responsible capitalism (businesses will compete for the prosperity of all); small town pastoralism

(small towns are idealised); individualism (a focus on the freedom of the individual), and moderatism (extremism and excess is discouraged). Gans also highlighted the importance of what he called social disorder news, which included natural disasters. In coverage of social disorder, the media are likely to focus on efforts to ensure order is restored. Gans says (1979:293), “Journalists guard not only the moral order embodied in the enduring values but a wide range of ideals, mores, and customs as well.” However, in forming his values Gans (1979:41) warned: “Identifying values in the news is a virtually impossible task because there are so many of them, indeed every story expresses several values.”

Murray Masterton (1998), in his doctoral thesis *What Makes News News*, tested Galtung and Ruge’s news values and identified three core elements for news across 40 countries. He found these core elements and six major news criteria were acknowledged almost universally as contributing to newsworthiness. The elements are interest, timeliness and clarity. His six criteria are consequence, proximity, conflict, interest, novelty and prominence. Although Masterton found evidence to support Galtung and Ruge’s original classifications of news values, the number of value lists indicates a problem with using them to explain news decisions - they are not a coherent category identity (Palmer, 2001) and they may differ across cultures and media. For example, the forces shaping news at *The Press* newspaper in Christchurch, New Zealand, will differ from those of *Beijing’s People’s Daily*. There is also a danger that by trying to codify news values the researcher ends with little more than a list of subject headings of stories (Brighton & Foy, 2007).

Golding and Elliott suggest that any news value is used in two ways by journalists and editors:

[Firstly] they are criteria of selection from material available to the newsroom of those items worthy of inclusion in the final product. Second

they are the guidelines for the presentation of items, suggesting what to emphasise, what to omit, and where to give priority in the preparation of the items for presentation to the audience. News values are thus working rules, thus comprising a corpus of occupational lore which implicitly and often expressly explains and guides newsroom practice (1979:114).

Hjarvard (2002) found that empirical studies to confirm the use of news values in selection processes provided mixed results, which backs O'Neill and Harcup's (2009) conclusion that news values are a "slippery concept". News values may assist in identifying what is news, but they do not necessarily explain the journalistic selection process or the influences on news decision-making. Do personal preferences, political ideology, news routines, or the nature of events influence decisions more? The answer is not easily found. News values do not have the power to explain why certain factors are more influential than others (Donsbach, 2004). Berkowitz (1997:XII) argues that "the notion that news naturally contains values making some occurrences newsworthy and other occurrences not so" should be discarded because "values are human constructions that have evolved through an informal consensus among journalists and others over time". To suggest that a journalist looks at a possible list of news items and sees their different news values, which is probably the closest to a working reporter's understanding of story selection, is to over-simplify the process.

Eilders (2006) has argued for a clearer distinction of news factors according to a theoretical perspective that recognises them as "either event characteristics or characteristics of the reality construction by journalists". In this approach the relevance of news values is linked to the social construction of reality carried out by journalists, which is closer to a more explicit sociological perspective of news content. Nonetheless, Eilders is right to conclude (2006:18): "News factors do not completely determine news selection. They can rather be seen as one of several influences on media content."

Putting the broader argument about news values aside, the application of news values to studying selection in a disaster event is a questionable exercise. Thorson (2012:70) says “disasters are inherently dramatic events that can be covered from a variety of angles” and their “compelling nature” ensures people are eager to read, listen or watch news as the event unfolds. To apply values in such a news event adds little to knowledge about the selection of content. Cynically, it could be suggested that traumatic disaster events are in many ways the perfect news story because they meet any possible configuration of newsworthiness. Although news values can explain why journalists are likely to prefer disaster stories over others, they do not provide a fine enough tool for explaining how they will treat the disaster story.

News values also tend to ignore the process of gathering news and the various actors who are part of producing news content. As McQuail (2010) notes, real-life happenings are complex and one, two or more news values may not be able to explain why an item was selected and presented in a particular fashion. Further still, it is unclear how changes in technology, including the rise of the internet and mobile devices, influence the application of news values in real-life situations (Brighton and Foy, 2007). For example, how to interpret Galtung and Ruge’s frequency value in the world of 24-hour online news with its pressure of continuous deadlines (O’Neill and Harcup, 2009)? In any given day news websites can change the selection and configuration of news many times over in a bid to attract and keep readers. While frequency, as a value, is probably still relevant it takes place within much shorter timeframes dictated by news technology.

The study of gatekeeping and news values led to a broader attempt to understand news content from a sociological viewpoint. A slew of research in the 1970s, including important studies by Gans (1979), Tuchman (1978), and Golding and Elliott (1979) asked: what is news selection and what are the key influences shaping the process? Sociological studies over the past 35 years are underpinned by the notion that news is

the result of the interaction between journalists, as part of media institutions, and society, which leads to the construction of a social reality (Berkowitz, 1997). These studies can be seen as trying to understand journalists' orientation to the society of which they are a part.

Sociologists have used different levels of analysis to explain news content, but they can be placed in three main categories of analysis - the individual, organisational and the societal (Archetti, 2007). Tuchman (1978), for example, argues news is constructed by journalists as part of their work routine in the context of the constraints placed on them by their own professional norms, institutions and society. Tuchman's discussion of the "news net" to explain the gathering of information for stories is indicative of the move to view news selection as a complex social process. Gans (1979), in *Deciding What's News*, also adheres to a theory of social interaction to explain the production of news.

From other theoretical standpoints scholars have argued for the importance of political/ideological, economic and cultural influences on the news (Herman and Chomsky, 1994, Kocher, 1986, Schudson, 2003). Many of the studies from the late 1970s have become standard references for communications researchers and promoted a focus on newsroom observation coupled with interviews and content analysis (Hjarvard 2002). Those studies can include a focus on the production of news within institutional constraints, the use of journalistic practice and routines to shape the news and the dependence on sources to produce content (an in-depth discussion on sources, who are often identified as the key influence on news content, will be conducted later in this chapter).

Dimmick and Gant (2000:628) in their study of television news argue that there are two "fundamental activities" in news selection: "sensing and valuation".

During sensing, decision makers evaluate a myriad of news story ideas against a set of news selection criteria to select potential news stories. During valuation, decision makers evaluate potential news stories against another set of news selection criteria to select actual news stories for broadcast. Conceptually, then, TV news decision making is a filtering process in which a subset of news story ideas is selected as potential news stories, and a subset of those is selected as actual news stories. (Dimmick and Gant, 2000: 628)

The news selection criteria proposed cited by Dimmick and Gant (2000: 629) are similar to lists developed by other scholars, but also includes the category of “affiliation”, which is an event sponsored or backed by the news outlet or includes the participation of journalists in the event. Affiliation, they said, was particularly important in the sensing stage of news decision making (ibid: 637). That idea of affiliation could be extended, in times of unusual news events such as natural disasters, to indicate the close attachment local journalists have with the community and people who also shared their experience. So news values increasingly cannot be seen separately from the situations they are applied in - they are not a system but part of a social context.

Reese (2001) developed a “hierarchy of influences” model in an attempt to develop an overarching theory for the production of news content based upon sociological scholarship. The model, in which each level of the hierarchy is linked to the other, is useful because it neatly brings together different strands of research. In summary, the model says individual preferences of journalists influence their stories; but journalists face constraints from routines and professional norms; the media organisation affects news selection through its policies and leadership; the organisation is influenced by societal groups including government institutions, sources etc; and ideology can influence news organisations. Reese’s theory is influential, but does not explain or

assess the power of one factor to influence news selection over another (Donsbach, 2004).

Schudson (2003) contends there are two distinct approaches to understanding news content - a cultural perspective, which is centred on story-telling, and the “social-organisational” view of news as a manufactured product. Most importantly for this research, the common ground for Schudson and many communications scholars is the perspective that news is a social construction of reality, formed through a web of interactions, which has the power to reflect and influence the way communities see themselves.

Donsbach (2004) has tried to move beyond the “shortcomings” of theories using news values, institutional objectives and societal influences to describe news selection as a process linked to the psychology of decision-making. He argues the problem for much theory is its inability to describe precisely which variables affect news selection. Instead, he says that at the most basic level journalists’ news decisions stem from the need for the social validation of their perceptions and a need to preserve one’s existing predispositions. These decisions are guided by a “shared reality” among journalists, dictated by their work process and the common frames they use for stories. The notion of a shared reality is an interesting viewpoint and one that may link with the development of theory in this research. Collective trauma suggests a traumatic disaster will likely foster a “shared reality”, but it is not restricted to journalists as a distinct group. Rather it extends to the shared experience of the event with the community at large.

In making his case, Donsbach notes that no one approach has a monopoly on the question of how news is selected and instead an integration of different approaches can improve knowledge; it is a point well made. The importance of this work is its focus on how journalists’ news selection is affected by a traumatic disaster. The contribution

of this thesis lies not in attempting to reformulate the whole field of news selection but to offer a new perspective, based on collective trauma, that helps to explain how journalists respond to a disaster such as the February 22 earthquake. Each new study that delves into the process of news selection can add to knowledge.

However, for the purpose of this study the core tenet of the body of sociological communications scholarship is vital - that news is the result of the “unique patterns of social interactions among media professionals and between them and the rest of society” (Archetti, 2007: 87). Scholars will differ on the impact specific forces (individual, economic, institutional) have on story selection, but it is the acknowledgment that journalists actively interact with society that is significant. This author’s study is rooted in a sociological approach to news selection. In a disaster, it is a journalist’s interaction with their community and their colleagues, in the context of the collective experience of trauma, which provides the framework for their news choices.

News framing

In acknowledging that news is a process that involves complex interactions and construction, we recognise that journalists help to make meaning - a list of facts is just that until a journalist builds a story from them (Schudson, 2003, Allan, 2010) and packages them in a certain way. For example, deciding the most important thing to put at the top of the story requires the interpretation of events. To help analyse how journalists interpret information and make meaning, the concept of framing has emerged.

Schudson (2003:35) says, “framing is as central a concept as there is in the study of news ... every account of reality necessarily presents some things and not others; consciously or unconsciously, every narrative makes assumptions about how the world works, what is important, what makes sense, and what should be”. Thorson (2012)

notes framing techniques have mostly been used on the coverage of politics, but the concept is equally suited to the study of disasters.

Framing recognises that every news story presents some issues and not others and allows journalists to process large amounts of information (Gitlin, 1980 cited in Allan, 2010; Entman, 1993). McCosker (2013: 384) notes that “conceptually, the frame relates to the structures, value systems and underlying assumptions that are produced by dominant social institutions and has its theoretical roots in the analysis of discourse and ideology”. Framing then is about selection and salience (Entman, 1993). McQuail (2010) says framing has two meanings: one is concerned with how news content is shaped by journalists within a shared frame of reference and the second is related to the effect of framing on the audience. This research is primarily concerned with the former meaning; journalists use frames to help determine news angles and highlight certain aspects over others (Dimitrova, 2005, Shoemaker & Reese, 1996).

To understand how local journalists operate within the context of a natural disaster, it is important to move beyond the published text alone, which will convey only part of the story. We must consider how the journalist’s experience itself is framed. Investigating why journalists frame disaster coverage in the way they do, and what motivates those frames, will help shed light on their news judgement and identify which issues are salient to them.

Framing theory started as a means of analysing communication across several areas of academic study including psychology and news media. In the social sciences, the theory has its roots in content analysis. A variety of definitions of framing and differing levels of analysis have emerged. More recently, framing has been concerned with social constructivism and the link between media and the public; specifically how frames can explain the way mediated information is interpreted.

Tuchman (1978) was among the first to acknowledge framing's role in news gathering, noting that journalists used frames to construct social reality. Jha-Nambiar (2002) points out media frames result from a mix of factors and reflect public beliefs, thus tying in with sociological approaches to news construction and recognising that reporters' frames will be influenced by wider social and cultural values alongside journalistic practices. The roles of sources will be discussed at greater length later, though it should be noted that studies have found sources directly influence the frames used in stories (McQuail 2010, Gans 1979, Graber, 1984, Tuchman, 1978).

Scholars have offered different definitions of framing, although they often share key characteristics (Iyengar, 1991, Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000, Tuchman, 1978). In a lot of communications research, scholars apply already deduced frames to the analysis of published stories in routine and disaster news events (see: Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000, Brunken, 2006, Roberts, 2007, Kuttischreuter et al 2011). Analysing the end communications with already deducted frames does not necessarily explain why the news was selected in the first place because frames found in news stories always require prior decisions (Scheufele, 2006).

Scheufele (2006: 65-66) places the identification of frames in three areas: among journalists and media systems; among recipients of media messages (society); and among cultural actors (political groups, organisations etc). This research is primarily concerned with journalistic frames - the starting point in the communication process. Dunwoody (1992: 78) describes journalistic frames as a "schema or heuristic, a knowledge structure that is activated by some stimulus and is then employed by a journalist throughout story construction". In this research, the stimulus is the February 22 earthquake - a non-routine news event that can shed light on the way journalists use frames and approach their news selection. Significantly, Scheufele (2006:69) says "crucial events are followed by times of orientation, in which journalists' frames alter

in terms of the particular key event''. The study of news selection in times of disaster is, therefore, a valuable academic pursuit because it offers an opportunity to understand how reporters change their practice in response to key events.

Donsbach (2004) agrees that "key events'', such as disasters, can illuminate the role of journalists' shared reality in influencing news decisions. He argues, persuasively, that the "news frames'' used in such events are a by-product of the reality that journalists share. "As journalists have similar values and attitudes, more than members of most professions, it is rather easy for them to develop a shared reality'' (Donsbach, 2004: 143). In key news events, however, that shared reality is likely to extend beyond the newsroom because journalists are experiencing the same problems as their audience on a personal level. The concept and methodology of framing provides the tool to track the extent to which journalists become part of the story in a disaster.

Importantly, framing researchers have found that how the media frames an issue affects the public's interpretation of events. Fiske and Taylor (1991) note that when information is framed, it means aspects of the topic are elevated so specific issues stand out to receivers, making them more widely processed and recalled. In using a particular frame, media can change perceptions of an issue. A frame can therefore become more dominant in the public forum; hence the importance of considering which journalistic frames prevail in a traumatic event, given the position they hold in creating a public narrative. Journalists also choose frames they think are available, even dominant, among their readers. Framing, therefore, directs attention to what is socially shared by journalists and audiences.

Researchers have developed many ways to measure framing at different levels.

Dahinden (2005), in a meta-analysis of a decade of mass communication framing research, found the majority of framing studies were limited to identifying frames in

their published form through the use of content analysis. However, to have true value, this author contends framing studies must try to understand why journalists make the decisions they do. For example, Brunken's (2006) content analysis study of media framing after Hurricane Katrina found media frames with human interest and conflict were more prevalent than responsibility and economic consequences. Brunken did not interview journalists about their disaster experience or approach to news selection in that study.

Roberts (2007), researching Hurricane Katrina's impact on journalists and their use of sources, used a content analysis of 667 New Orleans *Times-Picayune* and *Biloxi Sun Herald* front pages and Metro/Local section stories alongside interviews with 32 editors and reporters. Unlike Roberts, this study's aim is not to produce an account of when, or if the frames change over time, or to test assumed generic frames against the backdrop of the Canterbury earthquake (Roberts' study found that for the two newspapers, human interest framing was heightened after the storm). Instead, by inductively identifying the key journalistic frames, light is shed on what is influencing their news selection after a traumatic event. We can only understand published frames, identified through a content analysis of news stories, by first considering those journalistic frames at the start of the news selection process, and what guides them.

This research investigates the reporter's position at the nexus of news journalism and trauma in an effort to explain why local disasters are reported in a certain way. Framing research is useful for this study because it tells us journalists use frames of reality - embedded sets of assumptions, narratives and terms that organise thinking - to help them deal with large amounts of information. One of the questions for this thesis is how far are frames likely to shift as a result of a disaster? It will be argued that frames are likely to shift focus as a result of the event itself, reporters' personal experiences and their orientation to those they interact with to write their stories as part

of a collective trauma - a concept which will be discussed at greater length after a consideration of the role of sources in news content and the literature on journalism during disasters and the impact of trauma.

Source relationships

Studying source use by journalists is central to the question of how frames are formed in news stories, to how community is represented and to what extent reporters are willing to reflect the experiences of their audience. Schudson (2003: 134) contends that “to understand news we have to understand who the ‘someones’ are who act as sources, and how journalists deal with them”. Gans (1979:80) says sources are “the actors whom journalists observe or interview, including interviewees who appear on the air or who are quoted in articles... and those who only supply background information or story suggestions”. Strömbäck et al (2013:30) argue that “the relationship between journalists and their sources has been described as an interdependent relationship where each part needs the other”. Given the central role that sources play in the news production process it is important to measure any change in the relationship between them and journalists as a result of the February 22 disaster.

Many studies of the use of sources have investigated whether reporters or sources exert greater influence on the news (Berkowitz, 2009). They have focused on the importance of sources as part of the strategic ritual of doing journalism. Gans (1979:116) notes that “sources seek access to journalists, and journalists seek access to sources. Although it takes two to tango, either sources or journalists can lead, but more often than not, sources do the leading”. As Hjavard (2002:94) succinctly notes: “Sources deliver the raw material of news, without sources, no news.” Strömbäck et al suggest that:

“Journalists need news sources that can provide easily accessible information high in news value; are available, reliable and authoritative; reduce uncertainty and provide verification of the news accounts; provide diverse viewpoints; help in analysing and interpreting events and processes; grant legitimacy to the news; serve as a point of identification; and can express themselves in ways that suit the medium.” (2013:31-32)

Therefore, news media maintain close relationships with established institutional sources in council, government, business, education and sporting sectors as they must fill the news holes in newspapers and provide authoritative and trustworthy information for their audience. Conversely, institutions can use media as a means of communicating ideas, policies and issues. The problem with an over-reliance on sources from positions of power is that the news can be blinkered to the wider experience of people and focused primarily on the opinions of a relatively small minority of elites.

Broersma, den Herder, and Schohaus (2013:388) note that the interaction between reporters and sources “lies at the heart of journalism practice”.

Journalism is in essence a struggle over the boundaries of the public sphere; a struggle over what information becomes public and what remains in the private realm, and which topics are discussed openly and which remain concealed. Journalists and sources have no fixed roles in this struggle and the balance of power between them is not a given. It is constantly (re-)negotiated both on the practical and the symbolic level. After all, the power to determine which interpretations of social reality are legitimate is at stake. While sources decide what could be published,

journalists eventually determine what will be published and who will get a voice in the news. (ibid).

Research has also investigated the dominance of official/elite sources (i.e. politicians, government spokespeople, police) in news reports, or emphasised journalistic routine, such as the use of rounds or beats, as vital for capturing the news. Schudson (2003) says news, on a daily basis, can be boiled down to the interaction of reporters and government officials, both politicians and bureaucrats. It has been found that by routinely seeking information from well-placed or knowledgeable sources journalists can help meet the ever-present demand for news and fill the “news net” (Tuchman: 15-30). Sigal (1973) notes journalists select sources based on how sources make themselves available to reporters and help them to get assignments finished to deadline. Knight (1982:20) concludes that in the selection of news sources, reporters use a “double-edge filtering” approach where “access to news media is structured differently in favour of the powerful and bureaucratically organised” while at the same time the news media approach “powerful and bureaucratic sources of news more actively and persistently than other sources”. They do so because official sources meet journalists’ source requirements to more of an extent than those who do not hold some position of institutional power. These people also have a greater incentive and resource to influence media and therefore spend more time courting media attention (Strömbäck et al 2013).

According to Shoemaker and Reese (1996) many factors condition the acceptance of sources as bona fide by journalists including reliability, credibility and accessibility. For routine news, Gans (1979: 128-131) concludes there are six key areas that explain the type of sources journalists are likely to use. Journalists will first consider whether a source is suitable to a news item based on their use of them in the past. Next, journalists pick sources who supply information that they would otherwise have to spend time and effort to obtain. Third, Gans says journalists choose sources they

consider reliable to limit the need for double-checking. Journalists will also use trustworthy sources who lack an obvious agenda for providing information. According to Gans the most common criterion is that sources are authoritative - they hold public office or some tangible position of acknowledged esteem or expertise. Lastly, journalists look for sources that are articulate so there is no confusion about what they are saying in a story.

Journalists working across different media can also look to use sources with distinct strengths and weaknesses. For example, broadcasters can often refer to sources as “talent”, especially with regard to the way commentators are perceived as good for television because they are articulate, presentable and succinct. Notions of sources as talent can also relate to perceptions of who is the more powerful person to use as a source. For example, on matters of political import, the Prime Minister’s comments are considered more valuable than a lowly MP because of his place in the elite power structure.

Since Gans’ study, researchers have categorised sources according to their affiliation, or lack of connection, to institutions. Berkowitz (1987) categorised sources as being affiliated or unaffiliated with an agency or institution. Affiliated sources can be identified as those who belong to government bureaucracies, non-government organisations, businesses and other groups. They will often include officials themselves or appointed spokespeople. Institutions routinely use “communications staff” to manage their news messages and interactions with news media. The aim can be to garner positive coverage of an issue or ensure negative coverage is limited. Unaffiliated sources are less likely to be included in day-to-day news coverage (Berkowitz, 1987). Tuchman (1978) found journalists tend to favour sources from higher up the structure of an organisation because they are more authoritative. Stocking and LaMarca (1990) point out that journalists tend to use sources who

confirm their conclusion about an event. The closeness of the relationship between the sources and reporter is also significant. Soloski (1989) found it was common for a reporter who had a close relationship to a source to be influenced by that person's opinion. One of the questions this research considers is whether the Canterbury earthquake altered journalists' routine use of sources with regard to a change in the traditional use of "official" sources. A move away from the use of official sources, for example, could indicate a closer relationship with the public as a result of the disaster. A greater diversity of voices in stories would indicate a change in journalism practice.

Influential work by Blumler and Gurevitch (1981) suggested two models for the journalist-source relationship: adversary and exchange. The former suggests a battle for power over the news agenda and the latter an interaction for mutual benefit. Reich (2011) says the study of reporter-source relations falls into two main categories - unilateral and reciprocal. Under the former, one party was considered superior in forming the news, whereas the latter represented more of an equal exchange. Reich concluded that a mix of the two better explained the interaction. As Berkowitz (2009: 103) notes: "In all, both reporters and sources have a lot at stake. Reporters put their credibility and believability on the line with each news item they write. Likewise, sources regularly risk their career success. Putting both parts of this equation together suggests that the interaction between reporters and their sources is a delicately negotiated relationship."

Strömbäck et al 2013 rightly argue that it is not only official sources who matter. Although researchers might expect official sources to be the most prevalent in news stories the comments of ordinary people also matter. For the officials and the media, Strömbäck et al 2013 note, ordinary people are vital to how they are perceived. And another important source category is related to journalists themselves (Strömbäck et al 2013). Reporters covering a story can also act as sources, telling their audience exactly

what is happening - something that is more likely to happen in broadcast media with live crosses etc, but which is still applicable to print media, especially in its online versions.

There is no question, however, that journalists' choice and use of sources can help to determine frames for news stories (Berkowitz, 2009, McQuail, 2010, Schudson, 2003). Many studies in framing theory highlight how journalists rely on sources to shape the news (Gans, 1979, Graber, 1984, Tuchman, 1978,). Strömbäck succinctly notes that:

While the use of news sources is important in itself, it is also important because it influences the news content. Who gets to speak in the news ultimately decides what audiences may hear from the news. This is why the question of news sources is also a question of power and influence and why it is important to investigate the impact of the media's use of sources. (2013:33-34)

Importantly for this study, the nature of the news event may also affect how, or what, sources are used (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996). For example, Atwater and Green (1988), in their study of the June 1985 TWA hijacking, found individuals connected to the victims were more likely to be used than official contacts because of the highly emotional and human-interest focus of the story. Hornig and Walters (1993: 228-229), in their content analysis of news coverage of Hurricane Hugo and the Loma Prieta earthquake, found that reporters both embraced the use of "average citizens" and also relied heavily on "elected officials and spokespersons, the types of individuals who are traditionally available to them". The above studies imply that the way the event was framed influenced journalists - but they did not discuss how journalists' reaction to the trauma they reported may have influenced their source selection, a gap this project aims to address. Sood, Stockman and Rogers (1987), in their study of how journalists

operate in disasters, found reporters favoured official sources to explain what happened. One of the aims of this study was to test if that applied to the Canterbury earthquake.

Elsewhere, studies have found that in a disaster the relationship of journalists to sources changes. Berrington and Jemphrey (2003: 229), in their study of Scotland's Dunblane shooting massacre in 1996, discuss how such traumatic events can affect news sources. "Exceptional circumstances surrounding disaster reporting mean that methods employed in routine news-gathering may be no longer adequate to deal with the situation." Amid the chaos, official sources, including police, politicians, public relations staff, must adapt alongside the journalists covering the event. In a crisis, journalists can also find it hard to distinguish between what their sources are experiencing and their own understanding of events. For instance, in reporting the Falklands War embedded journalists often appeared to be involved participants rather than observers (Morrison and Tumber, 1988; Morrison, 1994).

The Dunblane study found some journalists would alter their use of sources, and attitude towards them, given the traumatic nature of the event. For example, "death knocks", to approach the family of shooting victims were used sparingly by some journalists and news outlets. Berrington and Jemphrey (2003), however, did not undertake a content analysis of coverage to measure which sources were most prominent during the event or if there was a greater or lesser dependence on official sources as opposed to non-agency-based ones. Use of fewer official sources, for example, may indicate a greater focus on "human interest" stories. The Dunblane study did highlight a growing degree of empathy between journalists and police/emergency services, and greater care with regard to the victims of the tragedy.

Joseph (2011) argues persuasively that empathy should be embraced more by journalists as part of their reporting practice, especially when dealing with sources who have experienced trauma:

Advocating a genuine empathetic listening technique that is an acceptable component of professional practice, instead of the current practice of detachment and impersonal engagement, or even the obverse of this, the “false friend”, can only improve experiences for subjects, particularly of trauma. It makes for better and more thorough, less detached and more honest journalism, and is particularly pertinent in dealing with stories of people who have suffered injustice meted out through violence, trauma, prejudice or disaster. (Joseph 2011:23-24)

In this study Christchurch journalists were asked whether they viewed empathy as having a greater influence on their work post-earthquake.

The relationship of sources and reporters is likely to change as the disaster moves through stages. Quarantelli (1989) suggests that source use after a disaster is likely to follow a pattern, which reflects the different stages of a disaster (discussed at more length in the next section of this chapter). First, starting with the initial event, journalists will rely on officials and a “command post” view. Local journalists, who have embedded relationships with sources, are likely to have a greater connection with officials immediately post-event because they have been through the disaster as well. It is likely officials will be given leeway by local journalists in the first days after the event because they understand the seriousness of the situation thanks to their own experiences. However, that relationship will change as local journalists move away from the disaster event and towards a broader understanding of the event’s impact on individuals, their community and themselves. In the recovery phase officials no longer need the media for emergency messages and are busy with the bureaucratic job of

creating a sustainable recovery. It is likely the highly symbiotic relationship developed immediately after the disaster starts to fray at the edges and turn into a more “them and us” situation. Journalists, for their part, because they have personal experience of the public’s trial post-disaster, are likely to see themselves as advocates for their problems, therefore creating tension with officials who no longer provide the same level of access to information. At what point the relationship between journalists and officials changed post-earthquake in Christchurch should be identifiable as part of this study.

Roberts’ (2007) study is one of the more enlightening, with regard to the use of sources by journalists in a disaster. Roberts (2010:58-62) found that after Hurricane Katrina journalists’ empathy with their readers, and fellow disaster victims, pushed them toward a greater use of sources without ties to official agencies or political power. Put simply, journalists gravitated to quoting “Joe Public” more often. Roberts writes: “A major change occurred as the journalists sought out a much wider variety of sources to contribute to the broader context, discussion of humanity, and personal circumstances of these longer stories. Sources who previously were very limited in number - indeed, marginalised - before the storm suddenly found voices as their numbers increased significantly.”

Roberts’ work supported previous efforts by Berkowitz and Beach (1993) who, using a content analysis of three newspapers, found that non-routine and conflict-based news would contain a greater diversity of sources, but only in news close to home. It’s important to study local media because they have pre-existing connections with the community that reporters from elsewhere do not (Aronoff and Gunter, 1992, Brown et al, 1987, McMullen, McClung, 2006, Quarantelli, 1996, cited in Usher, 2009). Pantti (2011:105), in a study of public anger expressed in British newspapers after man-made disasters, found a crisis “opens up a space for ordinary people to critique power holders” and enter news content as sources.

These findings are in contrast to the long-held view of Quarantelli (1996) that journalists' use of sources in a disaster reflect a "command post" perspective - in other words they rely on comment from officials and sources in charge of the disaster response effort. Bretherton and Ride (2011) also conclude that Western media tend to "legitimise the command and control approach" by picking "authoritative sources" such as emergency officials. By analysing Christchurch journalists' relationship with, and use of, sources this research adds to the debate about their use in disasters. The framework of collective trauma suggests that journalists will use official sources, but find their relationship with them changes as they take on a role more akin to advocacy because of their shared experience with members of the public. Because of that shared experience journalists are likely to - as Roberts found - call on non-official sources more often, and their news judgement will be affected because of their different attitudes towards sources and the changing interactions they have with society.

It is worth noting that in a digital news age the interaction between sources and journalists often happens online - email, crowd sourcing, comments on the bottom of news items, Facebook and Twitter. In a natural disaster, such as the Christchurch earthquakes, this interaction has the potential to provide journalists with a rich vein of newsworthy information. It also opens up a wider source net for journalists to trawl with relative ease.

No matter whom a journalist uses as a source, beyond debate is their importance to the news production process. A journalists' dependence on sources is a vital part of the news - without sources journalists cannot produce stories to the required standard or quantity. O'Neill and Harcup (2009) believe the interaction between news selection and the sources used in news production is "ripe for further investigation". The journalist-source relationship was a key part of this study to illuminate why particular

news decisions and stories were more or less prominent than others. Journalists' use of sources and their relationships with them act as a signpost to their news selection and what they see as priorities in their coverage. When reporting an event that involves a collective trauma it is expected that journalists will move away from a reliance on officialdom and give more space to non-affiliated sources - in other words they will focus on the concerns of individuals as they identify with their disaster experience to a greater degree until trauma gives way to the next stage of recovery.

Journalists and disasters

The nature of the media's role in a disaster has been subject to a substantial amount of academic inquiry. Ploughman (1997) states that disaster research linked to the media largely focuses on three areas: media accounts of disaster; the difference between print and broadcast coverage; and how the audience receives coverage. This project includes aspects of the first two areas but takes a step in a different direction to try to reach a better understanding of how traumatic disasters affect journalists and their news selection.

Sood, Stockdale and Rogers (1987: 27) note "news reports of disasters have inherent public appeal ... and are remembered the longest. Like a drama, the report of a disaster "grips people's imagination, heightens the sense of importance of human action, and facilitates emotional identification". Recent research (Hanusch 2010) acknowledges that while reporters perform a functional role in helping the disaster response effort they also help construct the emotional response and frame the event in their news narratives by trying to make meaning of the crisis for themselves and the affected community. These frames can reflect a communal response to the event. From this perspective journalists are "cultural producers" who provide authoritative accounts of the disaster (Hanusch 2010). These accounts take on greater importance when considering there are few circumstances where the media are more powerful than

during a disaster (Davis et al 2008). Disaster studies have also found the local media's role in the community is elevated after a crisis event (Roberts 2007).

Before discussing the roles of journalists in a disaster it would be helpful to briefly talk about what constitutes a disaster. Tierney (1989) says the term disaster is “used in several different ways by members of the general public, researchers, and practitioners” and as such has attracted different definitions. Sociologist Charles Fritz (1961 cited in Tierney 1989: 655) developed one of the classic disaster definitions, categorising them as an event where “society undergoes severe danger and incurs such losses to its members and physical appurtenances that social structure is disrupted and the fulfilment of all or some of the essential functions of the society is prevented”. Adding to this description Houston et al (2012) say disasters are collectively experienced traumatic events. Therefore, they are social events (Stock, 2007) requiring not only psychological responses from those individuals affected but a community-wide response to aid recovery.

A broad definition of disasters acknowledges that many different events may constitute a disaster. For example, at the simplest level there is the demarcation between man-made disasters and natural disasters. Natural disasters can include floods, fires, droughts, hurricanes, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, while man-made disasters may include technological mishaps including industrial accidents, major airline crashes, the release of toxic substances or political crises that cause conflicts (Pannti et al 2012). In each kind of disaster the onset will be different - for example an earthquake is sudden whereas droughts are not - and require different responses. Akason et al (2006) contend that earthquakes are unlike other disasters because “there is no warning, the impact is often widespread, and the effects multifarious. Furthermore, in the aftermath, the overhanging threat may continue for months, along with the possibility of aftershocks, and social and economic disturbances may be experienced for several

years to come''. As such, earthquakes are likely to have specific stressors of their own which affect people including the long-term uncertainty linked to aftershocks, which can reignite feelings of fear.

Stock (2007) has identified four disaster phases: the pre-impact phase, which includes prior knowledge or no warning of the disaster; the impact period that is the actual event; the post-impact phase with its focus on rescue operations; and the recovery phase. Journalists are central participants in all of these phases. From a purely functionalist perspective journalists help warn about a disaster - if a warning is possible - and then convey vital information about essential services post-event. They act as the conduits for official announcements about where residents can access help, food, water and other essential information regarding evacuations and medical assistance. For example, after the Christchurch earthquake the location of portable showers, toilets, food, evacuation information and the issuing of safety warnings formed a key part of a news outlet's content no matter the medium. Doane (2006:213), in her essay on catastrophe and broadcast media, concluded that "the social fascination of catastrophe rests on the desire to confront the remainder, or to be confronted with that which is in excess of signification''. In disasters, Massey (1995, cited in Roberts, 2007) says the public looks to the media to fulfil roles outside those they perform in routine news events. Studies have considered the nature of media use during a tragedy and found higher levels and frequency of media use by audiences.

Much risk communication and disaster research has focused on the need to incorporate the media in an attempt to provide accurate and timely information as a key part of the response effort (Quarantelli 1996, Cohen et al 2008). Sociologists and communication scholars have found that during natural disasters the public is reliant on the media to define the extent of the crisis (Cohen et al 2008). Walters and Hornig note:

Media play a critical role during all phases of natural disasters. Before a disaster, the press disseminates preparedness requirements and warning messages ... Immediately afterward, the press conveys critical information to officials, relief agencies, and the public regarding the crisis. It monitors response efforts and provides psychological support to the stricken communities. In the long term, media coverage illuminates issues associated with the regeneration of the community. (Walters and Hornig 1993:219)

Bretherton and Ride (2011), in their study of community resilience in natural disasters, found that the United States' national media's coverage of Hurricane Katrina could frame how people understood natural disasters. For example, many people believed because of media reports that New Orleans was experiencing a near uncontrollable mix of crime, poverty and social problems. In this way the blame for the hurricane's devastation and poor response efforts was shifted to recalcitrant locals. But while these elements were there, the major focus should have been "the extraordinary stories of resilience" (Bretherton and Ride, 2011:170).

The reliance on what are called "disaster myths" for news stories after a tragic event has attracted academic attention largely because they frame the disaster aftermath inaccurately. Tierney et al (2006) notes since the 1960s a large body of scholarship has shown that in most communities the response to disasters is characterised by proactive efforts to help each other and a drop in "deviant behaviour". However, because of the power of the media to frame events many still accept suggestions of widespread social disintegration. This is a problem for those responding to the disaster because often officials look to media reports to try to determine their priorities. Disaster myths can result in resources being allocated to issues that are not as pressing as they appear.

Conversely, Bretherton and Ride (2011) found that after Hurricane Katrina, local newspapers were more likely to show their community as actively working together to help each other as opposed to external outlets which sent journalists in to cover the crisis. “Affected by the natural disaster themselves, journalists, photographers, and editors had a greater focus on survivors, were less likely to blame them, and be negative about the place and people. Instead they gave locals a voice” (ibid:190). This finding is backed by research by Tierney et al (2006) which concluded that big news organisations focussed on negative images, including looting, before moving on to cover alternative news events, leaving local news outlets to “pick up the pieces” (Tierney et al, 2006). Robinson (2009) found local reporters were more likely to act as “ambassadors” for their community, negotiating conflicting loyalties in a participatory manner that set them apart from other media. After the devastating Japanese tsunami in 2011, Okamura (2012) studied local journalists working in some of the worst affected areas. He observes that their local knowledge and the relationship of mutual trust with the local people helped to frame their coverage. As such, local journalists saw themselves as taking on a role of great social significance in helping residents deal with the disaster.

The media’s important role in, and power to frame, disaster response efforts is not questioned by academics. Research in the past 25 years, especially since Hurricane Katrina slammed into the United States’ Gulf Coast, has focused on how journalists respond to the event both professionally and personally. At a basic organisational level disasters throw local journalists out of the comfort zone of their routine rounds reporting, as news outlets throw all available staff into coverage of the event. In such circumstances journalists will be challenged in ways different from the day-to-day slog to find stories for their publications and broadcasts.

According to Erikson (1978:2) journalists “are often asked to describe horrors that are almost indescribable, to explain horrors that are almost inexplicable” during a disaster.

This is especially the case for local journalists who find themselves caught up in the event, performing a role akin to emergency service first responders as they “rush towards danger, immersing themselves in the lives of survivors along with rescue workers” (Newman et al 2009: 291). In many ways after an earthquake the journalist’s role as a “first responder” is arguably more intense than other natural disasters because of the lack of warning, the shocking nature of the immediate physical damage to the area, human death toll and the frequent distressing aftershocks which may rumble on for months and years (Akason et al 2006). In these circumstances journalists are not removed from the pressures of the crisis in which they are caught (Berrington and Jemphrey 2003). Sood et al (1987:29) rightly note that disasters completely alter a journalist’s routine, throwing them into “a time of high stress and rapid change”, which forces them to “adapt to radically changed environmental conditions”. For example, on February 22 many Christchurch journalists were caught in the central city and arrived to fallen buildings at the same time, or before, emergency services. Their experience was similar to anyone else’s caught in the melee and they faced the vexed question of whether to report what was happening first or to help the injured and trapped. In some circumstances the reporters had colleagues who were killed or knew those being helped by rescuers. In this respect, local journalists face a different experience to those arriving from elsewhere to cover the disaster. How they respond, as their routines, relations and frames change, requires detailed study. Newman et al (2009:294) conclude: “Reporting can also become personal as news staff cope with their own responses to calamity. Perspectives and professional boundaries get blurred when the tragedies covered directly affect journalists’ workplace, home, community and loved ones.” These journalists’ decision-making about what to report, and what the community needs to recover, is likely to be different from outside media.

In a world of 24-hour news, with the ability to put information online or broadcast live from a crisis, journalists help to construct a picture of the event from either before it

happens, in the case of predicted events including hurricanes, or in the immediate aftermath for earthquakes (Cottle et al, 2012). They do so from a situation where emotion is high, they are working in extraordinary conditions and news routines are dramatically altered. Cottle (2009:51) states the intensive communication associated with disaster reporting is ‘‘inscribed with emotion and appeals to a sense of imagined community in response to the tragedy and trauma of the disaster’’. Liebes (1998:80), in describing broadcasters’ use of ‘‘disaster marathons’’ to focus on crisis events, found ‘‘emotion, conflict and melodrama are the name of the game’’ for news reports. Within this context local journalists help to ‘‘create the initial memories and images of those events’’ (Newman et al 2009:292), and craft meaning for not just to the local population but people nationally and internationally. How people perceive an event will be influenced by the way in which the media choose to frame it (Zelizer, 2002).

Downie (2012) found Canadian journalists who covered the Haiti earthquake in 2010, although arriving post-event from another country, became active participants in the disaster and ‘‘the story creation process’’. It is an idea that is applicable to Christchurch journalists - their role was not one of outside looking in but active participant alongside their community, which was suffering a collective trauma. As such, the degree of emotional involvement for journalists covering disasters and the media’s role in providing emotional support to a stricken community has become an important area of academic inquiry. Schudson (2003) points out that disaster reporting is different from routine news because it does not convey news in a ‘‘cool tone’’ but through entrenched emotions.

Perez-Lugo (2004) interviewed residents of Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, after Hurricane Georges in 1998, and found that while media fulfilled the traditional function of providing vital information they also offered emotional support and companionship to the affected communities. The study further concluded that ‘‘media can be actors, instead of mediators’’ in disaster settings (Perez-Lugo 2004: 211-213). Perez-Lugo

(2004) says the media unite those affected by fostering a sense of community and solidarity during the disaster and provide comfort by offering solutions and a means to vent public frustration. Although Perez-Lugo's study applies to a hurricane, the conclusion that the media can become more than an information base for audiences and function as a "coping mechanism", offering emotional support to hold communities together, is supported by other scholars and applies to an earthquake disaster. Xigen (2007) found that after the September 11, 2001, terror attacks the broadcast media provided a consoling function for viewers alongside a purely informational role.

As Pantti and Wahl-Jorgenson (2011) note, the news reporting of disasters is imbued with emotion of either individuals caught in the tragic event or the collective emotions of the larger community. Local journalists, as part of that larger collective, perform a role that promulgates a range of emotions in their reporting including horror, grief, empathy and anger (Pantti and Wahl-Jorgensen, 2011). In doing so, journalists are not just reporting events but are "active participants in political and social processes, especially in the context of social crisis" (Pantti and Wahl-Jorgensen, 2011:118-119).

The emotional discourse in disaster news reporting can be explained by the collective trauma experienced by the community. Walh-Jorgenson and Pantti (2011) argue this stems from a cultural shift among journalists. "By focusing on collective and individual emotions, including the emotions of journalists, journalists attempt to make sense of horrific events, suggesting ways of understanding the disaster" (Pannti 2010:233). From this perspective emotions are not just ordinary individual experiences but also social constructs "taught and enhanced through cultural narratives" (Cottle et al 2012:62). In disasters then it is possible to view the artificial boundaries between journalists and the world at their weakest. Cottle et al (2012) conclude there is a growing recognition that reporters are subject to traumatisation when they write about suffering and violence, which makes it easier to view them as vulnerable human beings who feel like the rest of us. As Wang et al (2012) note, journalists divert from the role

of detached observer to narrate their own feelings and experiences because of the moral shock and trauma of facing a terrible event. To accept such a viewpoint is also to acknowledge that journalists' news judgement and their practice are likely to be affected.

Dill (2010:42), in her study of local, regional and national coverage of Hurricane Katrina, found New Orleans-based media viewed the hurricane as "their disaster" and journalists did not differentiate between their emotional response to the event and that of the wider community. Dill's work supports earlier findings by Miles and Morse (2007:369) who found local journalists faced a "daunting task" after Katrina because they also had to deal with the direct effects of the event on their personal lives. Therefore, the level of emotional involvement is likely dependent on personal circumstances including whether journalists live locally, have strong ties to the area affected or whether they experienced the disaster themselves. In the Christchurch earthquake, for example, a large contingent of reporters from elsewhere in New Zealand and from overseas arrived in the city. Many of the New Zealand reporters, no doubt, had links to Christchurch making them closer to the story than their overseas counterparts. Although it was beyond the scope of this study, it would be worth researching how the degrees of separation between local, national and international reporters affect their reporting of a disaster from an emotional perspective.

Local journalists, then, will likely acknowledge their bonds to their community in times of disaster. Theunissen and Mersham (2011) argue emotions shared collectively are typically used to reaffirm social bonds. Disasters can become "integrative events, moments of national consensus and unity born out of mourning together" (Pantti & Wieten, 2005:301). Dill (2010) found that in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina local journalists' framing of the event was different from that of national reporters because they were far more emotionally and socially connected to the affected community.

Sylvester, in her book *The Media and Hurricanes Katrina and Rita: Lost and Found* (2008), analyses a compilation of journalists' narratives about the disaster, acknowledging the role of media in shaping the political, economic, and social landscape of post-Katrina New Orleans. In each instance the journalists shared a common commitment to covering the Katrina aftermath and recovery long after the catastrophe took place, with a positive focus on the rebuilding of New Orleans. Sylvester says that post-Hurricane Katrina the local media found what it meant to be part of a community. Journalists are key actors in helping a community, locally and further afield, bear witness to tragic events, aiding a collective response. They report the crisis through the lens of their own, and the community's, emotional response to the traumatic event.

Cottle (2012) says the practice of journalists bearing witness to tragic events took hold in the 20th century during the reporting of major conflicts and human disasters. News reporters are in a position of power because they are witnesses to the event for those who cannot actively participate and therefore the wider audience must rely on the news discourse to further their understanding of what happened. By embedding themselves in the disaster zone journalists add credibility to their reports. They do so in an attempt to "communicate something of the reality" of the event to their audience (Cottle 2012:10). Their stories will often contain an "injunction to care", suggesting that because of a shared humanity journalists and their audience have an empathy for those caught up in the tragedy. For local reporters that feeling of empathy is likely to be dramatically multiplied because of their personal involvement. Journalists are not merely witnesses, but active participants helping to lead the community's response to the event. Their descriptions of shock and disbelief are likely to be reflective, if not identical, to those they are quoting. Kawamoto (2005:3) contends, "journalists who are sensitive to the suffering of others and understand the complexity of emotional trauma are often able to write about traumatic experiences in a way that is informative,

engaging and often helpful to readers''. That feeling of empathy for those they are reporting about may help to push journalists into new modes of reporting, for example taking on a greater advocacy role for people post-disaster.

By embedding their reporting in an emotional tone during a disaster, journalists also help to perform a kind of ritual and ceremonial task - that of unifying society at key moments (Kitch, 2003). After the September 11 attacks, for example, a series of themes emerged that helped the public to understand what had happened - those themes, including courage, sacrifice and patriotism, were part of a cultural narrative largely articulated by the media (Kitch, 2003). Those themes, of course, may also stem from the use of particular sources who help to frame the post-disaster debate. During times of upsetting news, journalists' storytelling "is not a string of unrelated facts but a symbolic structure in which facts function to disclose larger meaning" (Kitch, 2003:214). Journalists, then, act as carriers of key messages to the public, reflecting and presenting a construction of reality for their audience to consider. According to many scholars, through their storytelling journalists can help form a collective memory of the event and aid the grieving process - a form of journalistic ritual - through stories that help society recover while reaffirming the dominant set of values and ideology (Robinson 2009; Kitch, 2003; Zelizer & Allen, 2011).

Riegart and Olsson (2007) suggest that crisis journalism has a ritual of its own. In such events the media play the roles of psychologist, comforter and co-mourner. By carrying out these rituals media institutions legitimise themselves at the centre of society and play a vital part in the community's healing process. Hanusch (2010) takes this argument a step further and contends that journalists help instruct audiences in the appropriate way to deal with grief after a crisis. The media is now the primary vehicle, he argues, for the expression and construction of public grief after tragic events. Theunissen and Mersham (2011), in one of the first studies on reporting in the Christchurch earthquake, focused on the national media's representation of stages of

grieving and mourning. The authors found that emotion is necessary and expected when disaster is reported, challenging traditional views of objectivity over emotion in reporting. They concluded:

The emotion shown in reporting of the disaster mimics the process of grieving and in this case the process of national grieving. Media reportage of such disasters, using emotion and responding to emotion, is necessary to allow those affected directly or indirectly to mourn what they have lost. In the process the media both reify and reconstruct national identity.

Theunissen and Mersham (2011:420)

The significance of the scholarship discussed in the preceding paragraphs regarding emotions and reporting in a crisis is the placement of the media and journalists as social actors who construct narratives based on their proximity to, and sharing of, the disaster. They do so not from a position of detachment but as participants experiencing the event. In a disaster, it is not just about journalism making sense of the event in ways appropriate to the society's culture. Reporters participate in the disaster physically, emotionally and are part of the societal response. While they must still carry out their professional role as journalist, it is difficult to imagine how a reporter could not be swayed emotionally by the powerful elements of fellowship and commonality that exist in a natural disaster and especially that of a major earthquake with its sudden and violent attack on a community and its social structures.

While many researchers acknowledge the role of emotion in crisis reporting they do not place it within a framework that recognises the collective trauma in which the local media are a part. When trauma is shared by others through the media, social meaning is given to individual experience, and it enters into the community consciousness, encouraging us to re-evaluate how we are connected to others (Hutchinson 2010 cited in Theunissen and Mersham, 2011).

A theory of collective trauma, as will be explained below, can help explain the role the media plays to console an affected community and the use of emotion in their news narratives. Local journalists make meaning of the event based on their own emotions, their disaster experience and the emotional reaction of the society in which they are a part. They recognise a collective suffering and their responsibility to help others, which help to fuel the use of emotional narratives to tell the disaster story. Within this context their orientation or relationship to the community and their sources is likely to change because they are participants, not detached bystanders.

Journalists and trauma

Journalists have been exposed to varying levels of stress and trauma since the inception of news reporting. However, historically the issue was not subject to much scientific examination (Smith, 2008). To a degree, notions of distance and neutrality may have masked how journalists themselves experience trauma as they report the news - a gap research is now trying to fill. Anecdotal evidence of how reporters' work could affect them has existed for a long time, but the study of journalists reporting traumatic events, whether that be in war, while working a round daily or in disasters only started to grow within the past 20 years, especially since the establishment of the Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma in 1999. The centre has helped to focus attention on the issue of trauma for academics and the industry, which traditionally paid little regard to how journalists deal with traumatic situations.

What is meant by the word trauma? Long (2013:4) noted in her research on six sub-Saharan Africa reporters that they referenced trauma in ways that linked to its "psychological definition as an extremely distressing or emotionally disturbing event". The interviews in this study will show that Christchurch journalists referred to their earthquake experiences in a similar way.

The amount of academic work, while growing, is still relatively small and much of it has focused on how journalists in life-threatening circumstances, bearing witness to death and destruction, are exposed to psychological pressures (Smith, 2008, Keats and Buchanan, 2011). The body of research places little emphasis on how traumatic situations affect news selection. While trauma at an individual level is being studied, there are gaps in understanding how trauma becomes part of journalistic practice. In covering the earthquake, do Christchurch journalists convey the trauma that other people have experienced alongside their own? Studies have considered both the impact of major events, such as war or disaster on journalists, and exposure to “routine” trauma news in the daily coverage of crime or accidents. Cote and Simpson (2000:42) state, “journalists can become trauma victims simply by doing their work - by visiting scenes of destruction, talking to, and photographing people who have been injured or traumatised. Sometimes, they feel the effects after seeing dead and injured people and the debris of deadly events.” Even though more research shows journalists can suffer emotional distress due to their work, it has taken a long time for the industry to acknowledge the issue. Dworznik (2006) contends there are two oft-cited reasons for the position: First, some journalists believe that classroom and newsroom education prevents most effects of trauma because of a focus on professional norms and conduct. Second, it is believed a good journalist can compartmentalise emotions so not to affect their stories. From this standpoint journalism culture can prevent the wider consideration of trauma and its impact on reporting practice. This study argues that such a level of detachment is neither likely nor possible in a major local disaster.

In one of the first studies to consider the effects of traumatic events on reporters, Freinkel et al (1994) questioned journalists who watched the execution of a murderer at San Quentin Prison in 1992. Fifteen journalists completed a stress reaction survey after the execution. The study found several journalists had trauma symptoms akin to those experienced by people in a natural disaster and concluded that witnessing

violence could promote anxiety and other issues. In 1999, Simpson and Boggs' exploratory study of 131 journalists from newspapers in Washington and Michigan found nearly 90 per cent had reported a violent news event as part of their routine work and 40 per cent could vividly recall those stories. The pair linked journalists' experience of trauma to that of emergency service workers, finding reporters "are strikingly similar to public safety workers in both their experiences and their emotional responses" (Simpson and Boggs, 1999:17). The difference between the media and emergency service response to trauma was that journalists and their managers paid little attention to the impact such events had on them (Simpson and Boggs, 1999).

Newman et al (2003) undertook a more rigorous approach to studying post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among 875 United States news photographers. PTSD can be understood as symptoms directly as a result of physical and emotional harm. Nearly all the photographers had been exposed to some kind of traumatic event. Those events were most likely to include murder and motor accidents. The study found the rate of post-traumatic stress disorder was relatively low at 5.9 to 6.7 per cent although several factors could contribute to a higher risk including the number of events covered, the support available and the nature of the assignment. In comparison, ambulance workers suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder and symptoms of traumatic stress at a rate of 22 percent (cited in Dworznik 2006). Pyevich et al (2003), using a similar sample size of American newspaper journalists in the year 2000, found 4.9 per cent of respondents had the markers of post-traumatic stress. Scholarship shows that the experience of trauma is not limited to senior reporters. Simpson and Boggs (1999) found the journalists, photographers and editors in their study said that they were not prepared for their exposure to trauma when sent on news jobs. Nearly all the participants had reported a traumatic news event at some stage. Neither study considered how the traumatic experiences might impact on a journalist's news selection or whether they shared the trauma experience with others.

Smith (2008: 107-108) found, in his study exploring a model of risk and resilience for journalists, that reporters “frequently reported experiencing horror, disgust, and a sense of helplessness upon responding to a work-related traumatic event (60%-69% respectively)”. He also found that participants considered events involving dead or injured children (31%), auto accidents (11%), mass casualties (10%), and murder (10%) most frequently as the most stressful. Smith’s study included 167 print and broadcast journalists in the United States and found a post-traumatic stress rate of 9.7%. Buchanan and Keats (2011: 129) note the rate of psychological problems experienced by journalists is still unclear and depends on the methods used by researchers and the situations that journalists find themselves in (i.e. routine news event v embedded in war zone) (ibid): “The prevalence rates of post-traumatic stress in the literature vary from 29% to 4%.”

Closer to home, an Australian study (McMahon 2001) of 57 print reporters concluded those who had covered trauma were more likely to suffer stress-related problems including anxiety, insomnia and depression. With regard to how journalists deal with the impact of trauma reporting, Buchanan and Keats’ (2011) ethnographic study of 31 Canadian journalists and photojournalists and their coping strategies found they used a range of measures including avoiding difficult jobs; using black humour; physical exercise; controlling one’s emotions and memories; focusing on the technical, practical, and mechanical aspects of the job; and substance misuse.

Hanusch (2010) says that despite journalists’ frequent exposure to traumatic events, what stands out is that most appear to cope well with trauma, especially in comparison to other parts of society. To say they cope well compared to others, of course, does not explain in any way how the trauma might affect their work. The studies mentioned above are similar in four ways. First, they were focused on the psychological impact of the trauma and not the significance for journalists’ work practices and did not

necessarily discuss the effect on reporters' work. Second, they found nearly all journalists in a North American context had reported some kind of traumatic news. Third, many journalists were negatively affected in some way after covering traumatic news, but that did not necessarily extend to the level of PTSD. Fourth, the research focused on how journalists responded to trauma news coverage in the course of their routine daily work and not on major news events such as war and natural disasters, where the level of death and destruction is likely to be much higher.

Feinstein et al (2002) studied 140 war journalists from major organisations including CNN, BBC and Reuters for trauma-related symptoms and compared them to 107 journalists who had not covered war. The war correspondents displayed higher levels of alcohol misuse and depression. They suffered PTSD at up to five times the rate of non-war journalists with 28.6 per cent in that "harm category". Later, Nicolson and Feinstein (2005) found of 85 journalists embedded with troops during the second Iraq war 15 per cent experienced PTSD symptoms. The experience of war correspondents is likely to be similar to those journalists who are caught in a large natural disaster - conditions are perilous, death and destruction are front and centre and it is hard to detach from the coverage because they are caught in the middle of the event.

Weidmann et al (2008) asked European journalists about their coverage of the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami. Those journalists faced many traumatic situations including exposure to death and destruction on a massive scale. The PTSD rate was 6.6 per cent for those in the study and a small number showed signs of depression. None of the participants in that study lived in an area affected by the tsunami, which is a point of difference for this research. In some ways their ability to return home, away from the disaster zone, may have helped the European journalists detach from the news they were reporting. Detachment is not easy when the disaster hits a journalist's home town. Feinstein and Owen (2013) studied how journalists responded psychologically to the

terrorist attacks of September 11 and found a significant increase in symptoms of PTSD amongst domestic journalists pre and post-September 11. Significantly for this study, Feinstein and Owen found that in fulfilling their key task of keeping the public informed in time of crisis, journalists could be vulnerable to the challenges posed by the trauma they faced. The question that requires answering is what impact can that experience of trauma have on telling the news?

Closer to home, as noted earlier, Hollings' (2005) study of 13 Kiwi journalists covering the Asian tsunami sits alongside the Weidmann research in that the reporters did not live in the disaster-struck areas. It is also worth re-emphasising there is a dearth of New Zealand research on the issue of journalists and trauma with most of the literature stemming from the North American experience. Newman (2009) suggests: "Future studies should transcend simply studying journalists' psychopathology; instead, a focus upon problems and concerns that are not in the clinical range, but that may affect journalists' quality of life, relationships, and their views about the world, would be far more instructive."

This study of the Christchurch earthquake is in part an answer to Newman's challenge in that it moves beyond considerations purely focused on psychological harm to consider the impact on journalists' news decisions. Outside of the psychologically-focused research on journalists and trauma there are a few qualitative-based studies (Keats and Buchanan 2011) considering the impact on reporters' work practices and news selection.

Stepping away from the measurement of purely psychological factors Usher (2009) used a qualitative study of the *Times-Picayune* newspaper's coverage of Hurricane Katrina to analyse how the disaster affected local journalists' views of objectivity and public advocacy. That study is instructive for this research because it focused on the implications for covering a disaster in a journalist's home town on aspects of news production. Usher conducted in-depth interviews with the newspaper's journalists and

analysed the interviews in the context of theories of news production. Two findings emerged. First, journalists saw their role as “objective” recorders of events complicated by their personal experience. Second, journalists saw the newspaper as an advocate for the city and they were willing to mark themselves out as active participants in getting results for the city and individuals. The media shifted towards an “involved participant role” and “subjectively interpreting facts based on their own experiences” (Usher: 225). Usher found nearly half of the journalists at the *Times-Picayune* (TP) lost their homes and a quarter had damaged homes. In such conditions, which are unusual for a journalist, reporters channelled their own experiences into their writing, raising questions about the tension between objectivity and advocacy. “One of the most common assessments made by journalists was that, for the first time in their lives, they had become part of the story they were covering. For many journalists, this marked a significant change from past practices,” Usher writes (ibid:219).

Usher did not attempt to place her findings in a broader theoretical framework, although the conclusion is clear that journalists’ news selection is likely to reflect an outlook formed by being part of the story they are covering and geared towards advocacy for readers. A theory of collective trauma can provide a framework for explaining why journalists change their approach in a disaster such as Hurricane Katrina. Usher’s study joins a small number of qualitative studies into journalists’ responses to traumatic events. Although Roberts’ previously mentioned research on Hurricane Katrina was focused on changes in the prevalence of news frames and not on trauma per se, the researcher concluded (2010:67): “Journalists channelled the impact of the storm on their personal lives into their work. They were in fact translating their personal feelings into the shaping of their stories. They were dealing with their own losses at home, then go out and cover the losses of others.” Usher’s finding shows that news values are a blunt tool by which to measure journalistic

practice after a disaster. A list of news values is not sufficient to explain what is happening to news selection, news frames and the use of sources.

Dworznik's (2006) qualitative study of 26 American television reporters and photographers focused on their personal narratives about traumatic experiences. Participants were not asked directly if they had experienced any symptoms of PTSD or secondary traumatic stress, but instead were asked to recall their reactions and thoughts during the incidents and afterward. Dworznik's analysis found journalists formed their personal stories about traumatic events according to a need to clarify a sense of purpose, offer justification for their actions, to maintain a feeling of control or to increase their self-worth. One lesson from Dworznik's study is it showed journalists are self-reflexive about their experiences and try to make meaning of events rather than simply reporting them like a kind of automaton unaffected by what they see. Dworznik also found rapidly evolving internet communications meant journalists were more often able to report from the centre of a crisis. In an event on the scale of the Christchurch earthquake journalists filed immediately from the scene armed with their cellphones or laptops. This is likely to exacerbate the strains they face, because they have little time to remove themselves and think a story through.

Elsewhere, Morrison and Tumber (1988) found journalists covering war were more likely to self-censor because of the connection formed with the soldiers and people they covered - a similar situation to what is likely to happen in a natural disaster in a reporter's city, which has implications for news selection. Some studies on disasters (Molotch & Lester 1975, Ploughman, 1997) concluded journalists were more likely to focus on people in positions of power. Those findings are contrasted by more recent research showing disasters eliminate ideas of journalists operating above the fray (Zelizer 2002).

Novak and Davidson (2013) used a grounded theory approach to analyse 10 semi-structured interviews with members of the media who reported on hazardous events overseas - the first point of difference from this study, which is focused on local reporters. However, interestingly, they found that identifying with their professional role offered journalists a protective factor in dealing with trauma and stress.

In summary, the studies of psychological injury based on what might be considered routine news work consider the accretive impact of trauma events on individuals and rarely explain how their findings might influence the practice of journalism. Nor do the studies place a big focus on considering the impact of a large one-off traumatic event, such as a natural disaster, on local journalists' news judgement. Some, such as Usher and Roberts, note the new relationship journalists form with their community based on their common experience. This thesis differs from previous studies by placing journalists at the centre of a collective trauma, which acts to influence their news selection, use of sources and frames. Importantly, what the psychological research confirms is that journalists are exposed to traumatic events, which can have an impact on them personally and professionally because it is hard to separate the two in such events. They, like any other person in society, struggle to be completely detached from a traumatic event. However, as noted at the start of this chapter, there is little understanding of how trauma affects journalists' news decisions. By studying how Christchurch journalists responded to a major disaster in their city, this research aimed to fill that void and add to knowledge about the key factors influencing reporters' decisions in times of crisis.

Collective trauma

Often, when trying to explain to non-journalists how a reporter goes about his or her job in trying circumstances, this author uses the example of attending a murder crime scene or high-profile court case. The explanation generally follows the line that

although the reporter is at the traumatic event, they are essentially outside it looking in and the news is not connected to the journalist's personal life. In such circumstances, it is explained, the reporter can move on from one difficult story to another using the practice and routines of the profession to detail the news. Because the event is not part of their personal life there is an attitude that it can be put aside when the reporter is not at work or when the next new story requires their attention (Buchanan and Keats, 2011). Although simplistic, and not illustrating the cumulative effect over time, for some journalists, of covering traumatic criminal events, the example raises a key question: Are local journalists affected by a traumatic natural disaster in their town in a similar way to the public they are covering and, importantly, do they view themselves as victims and participants in the event?

If the answer to above question is yes, then traditional notions of the journalists' relationship to their audience may be altered and there may be implications for news values, how reporters maintain traditional notions of objectivity, or advocate for the people in the society of which they are a part. In effect, there is no wall separating the journalists from the people they are reporting in a traumatic event. As discussed earlier in this chapter, research is increasingly interested in how journalists' stories have a personal impact on them and the way they work. A disaster event in a journalist's hometown brings into sharp focus the impact of their personal experience on professional practice. They share the disaster experience in a personal way - their own families, friends, colleagues, homes and workplaces are affected - which goes beyond other stories they cover on a "routine news day". Journalists may become part of the collective trauma experience, which influences their news selection and reflects how they engage with the community. That interaction will not be simple or necessarily coherent with regard to adhering to news routines or notions of news values. What are the implications of doing traumatised journalism?

A range of theoretical approaches can be used in the study of trauma. Kai Erikson, in his classic work on the 1972 Buffalo Creek Flood, *Everything in Its Path*, takes a sociological approach to a disaster's impact on a community. The approach dovetails with the sociological basis for this research. Erikson (1978:153) says the Buffalo Creek disaster had "two closely related but nonetheless distinguishable facets - individual trauma and collective trauma". Individual trauma is the initial "blow to the psyche" resulting in shock from the exposure to a terrible event including death and devastation on a large scale. Erikson's (1978:186) description of the Buffalo Creek tragedy can be applied to individuals caught in the February 22nd earthquake: "The disaster stretched human nerves to the outer edge." Collective trauma, on the other hand, recognises a "blow to the basic tissues of social life" (ibid) that works on a broader level and evolves as those affected realise how their community has changed and the bonds that previously held a society together are placed under strain. According to Erikson, a key ingredient in collective trauma is a feeling of a loss of "communality" because of the damage done to community links in a disaster - for example neighbourhoods no longer exist and the routines of community life are changed. Erikson says the two kinds of trauma are closely related and in a disaster are at work simultaneously. Novak and Davidson (2013:314) note that trauma "is considered to affect not only individuals but also entire networks, acknowledging the collective role families and wider communities play in fostering recovery, resilience, and growth".

Therefore, a journalist working on February 22nd in Christchurch would experience their own individual trauma associated with the earthquake event itself, which then became part of a wider collective experience that recognised the blow to the community. In his study, Erikson used interview transcripts as the means to understand how those caught in the disaster felt about the event, its impact on them personally and

at a community level. This research has taken a similar approach to journalists' narratives.

Following on from Erikson's work, Arthur Neal (1998: ix), in his book *National Trauma and Collective Memory*, argues that national traumas form after "individual and collective reactions to a volcano-like event". The trauma grows out of "an injury, a wound, or an assault on social life as it is known and understood". These traumas can include a range of events such as natural disasters, collapse of an economic system and technological catastrophe. Neal (2005) argues that collective trauma differs from individual trauma because it is shared with others.

Through the many forms of mass media, traumas become epitomised by episodes of symbolic meaning that eventually become incorporated into the social and political life of the nation. The symbolic events are either major happenings as the trauma was unfolding or subsequent consequential events in the mass culture of remembrance. Neal (2005: xii)

Producing accurate news reports and raising awareness for the community is an important part of the emergency and humanitarian response to a disaster. Journalists, by reporting the event, help the public to frame an understanding of what has happened. For Neal, collective trauma has the power to create "radical change" that can alter people's behaviour, practices and attitudes. The radical change can be applied to "subgroups of the population" and prompt emotional responses and public attention. Using Neal's argument, media workers, as an identifiable sub-group of the population, are subject to the change. His words to describe the wider population can be applied to journalists, who are central actors in the response to disasters: "Dismissing or ignoring the traumatic experience is not a reasonable option" and nor is "cynical indifference" (ibid: 9-10). As a part of national traumas people share their reflections of the tragedy

and its consequences. Journalists are part of that interaction on a personal and professional level.

This research on collective trauma raises many questions about journalists and their work - how far are they able to step outside the collective's experience? Is part of their function to help a culture understand itself? Are journalists put into an impossible position by expectations that they do both? Do local journalists' existing ties to the community accentuate their experience of collective trauma? Does the event become "their disaster" as opposed to reporting a crisis in another country, thereby breaking down the barrier between the event, those affected and the storyteller? In these circumstances a journalist's approach to news selection is open to change. For Neal (1998: 18) a traumatic event opens the way for "new opportunities, innovation and change" across various sectors of society.

Trauma theorist Jeffery Alexander offers a different view of collective trauma in his book *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* (2004) by concluding trauma can be a cultural phenomenon. Alexander's theory extends the work by Erikson and places collective trauma as a cultural and social phenomenon that dovetails well with notions of news being a social construction. He says:

Cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways ... It is by constructing cultural traumas that social groups, national societies, and sometimes even entire civilisations not only cognitively identify the existence and source of human suffering but 'take on board' some significant responsibility for it. Insofar as they identify the cause of trauma, and thereby assume such moral

responsibility, members of collectivities define their solidarity relationships in ways that, in principle, allow them to share the sufferings of others. (Alexander, 2004:1)

The Christchurch earthquake, based on the scale of damage and loss of life, is a “horrendous” event capable of leaving “indelible marks” on the community, journalists included. As a result, reporters are likely to discuss their news selection in terms of frames that acknowledge their responsibility to help others and recognise their suffering. Alexander’s theory recognises that trauma is “not something naturally existing; it is something constructed by society” (2004:2), thereby placing the theory alongside those of news being a social construction. His argument is informed by lay trauma theory and an enlightenment mode of thinking - the key point of both being a focus on the collective. Lay trauma theory says collective trauma emerges from the traumatic event itself. Enlightenment theory also adopts this approach but views trauma as a rational response that is both problem-solving and progressive (Alexander 2004: 3). However, Alexander takes his proposition a step further by treating trauma as a socially constructed phenomenon, which meshes with the sociological approach to news construction in this research.

The construction of collective trauma is aided by “carrier groups” who are the “collective agents of the trauma process” (2004:11). Carrier groups are defined as holding a particular place in the social structure; for example reporters and their official sources - whether they are politicians, police, council workers etc - are part of institutions that hold central roles post-disaster. These groups have “particular discursive talent for articulating their claims - for what might be called meaning making - in the public sphere” (Alexander 2004: 11). The media, arguably, are a central part of this group because of their power to disseminate information. Outside institutional groups the media act as a conduit for the voices of individuals who are part of the collective trauma, placing a human face on the tragedy with which they

come to identify themselves. Alexander highlights the importance of framing in a disaster adding (2004:18): “Mediated mass communication allows trauma to be expressively dramatised and permits some of the competing interpretations to gain enormous persuasive power over others.”

Specifically, the media, through their communications, help to make the earthquake a cultural crisis by making meaning from the mix of their own experiences and those of the community of which they are a part. Journalists, then, as part of the trauma process, help to reflect and guide an understanding of “the shape of social reality” (Alexander 2004: 11). Alexander says the mediated trauma process can be likened to a speech act - the carrier group is the speaker, the audience is various groups in society and the message is conveyed in a way that reflects not just the event itself but the historical context in which it takes place:

The goal of the speaker is persuasively to project the trauma claim to the audience-public. In doing so, the carrier group makes use of the particularities of the historical situation, the symbolic resources at hand, and the constraints and opportunities provided by institutional structures. In the first place, of course, the speaker’s audience must be members of the carrier group itself. For the wider audience to become persuaded that they, too, have become traumatised by an experience or event, the carrier group needs to engage in successful meaning work. (Alexander 2004: 11-12)

The media narrative, trauma theory suggests, has the power to influence how a community responds to a crisis event. For this research, however, it is not suggested that local journalists simply convey messages about trauma for a waiting audience. Rather, the journalist sits within a web of interactions whereby they receive messages about the earthquake experience of others, see the unfolding event for themselves and construct their stories through the prism of their own experience - in doing so they help

to create a new shared reality with their audience. Interviewing Christchurch reporters illuminates the significant influences on their journalism in a disaster as well as how they themselves frame those factors.

The theory of collective trauma, inherently, as noted briefly previously, has implications for traditional notions of the “objective journalist”. Objectivity’s value as a professional norm has been debated for decades by academics, journalism teachers and professionals, with many recognising it is a difficult concept and ideal to attain in practice (McQuail, 2010; Tuchman, 1978, Schudson, 2001). According to Skovsgaard et al (2013:23) “adherence to objectivity is a highly treasured feature of journalism’s professional self-image”. In this author’s professional journalistic experience, and based on the interviews with participants in this study, individual journalists try to mediate traditional notions of objectivity that suggest they should disengage themselves from their own emotions and opinions as they try to separate fact from value (Usher 2009: 217) with a more modern understanding of impartiality based on accuracy and fairness (Ward 2004). Skovsgaard et al (2013) note that the utility of objectivity has been challenged on several grounds including claims that it forces journalists to be detached from what and whom they are covering, which leads to debate about value judgements and the introduction of bias. In a disaster such as the Canterbury earthquake, journalists are likely to be placed in a position where they will reappraise their connection to the story and those they are writing about. Therefore, Christchurch journalists are unlikely to stand detached from the story, as the Canterbury earthquake did not differentiate between reporters and their audience. As Tully (2008:303) notes: “journalists are not robots devoid of emotions, values and opinions even if they do adopt the air of a detached bystander neutrally observing and reporting the world around them”. This concept was illustrated by September 11, 2001, when journalists and the communities they served were united in a collective trauma (Rosen, 2002). After September 11 Schudson (2002, 2003 cited in Usher) noted

there were three moments when objectivity could be put aside. They included in tragedy, where news organisations take on a pastoral role; in public danger, where newsrooms provide neighbourly reassurance; and in national security crises, where newsrooms try to protect the nation. Therefore, adherence to ideas of objectivity in the traditional sense is unlikely to play a big part in journalists' news selection process immediately after the Canterbury earthquake. Local reporters shared the sorrow and shock experienced by their readers and viewers. A theory of collective trauma helps to explain why journalistic detachment becomes a difficult achievement for journalists and an inadequate frame for analysis.

In this research, collective trauma provides an overarching framework for considering the impact on journalists' news judgement and their relationship with sources in a crisis event. The theory sits alongside attempts to explain news selection through sociological means in times of "routine news". The theory recognises that journalists collectively share the experience of the disaster with their community. But they do this as a "carrier group"; making meaning of the event through their news selection. The theory suggests that journalists' news selection will be framed in the context of their own disaster experience (they are victims too and central actors in the response); their recognition of a collective suffering and their responsibility to help other people (through their reporting and on a personal level); the acknowledgement that their orientation or relationship to the community and sources has changed - journalists are likely to see themselves as closer to their audience and more representative of their needs. The above helps to explain why disaster research using content analysis of published frames will often find the human interest frame is most dominant post-disaster (Brunken, 2006, Roberts, 2007) - it is partly because journalists, as part of the collective trauma process, have a closer relationship and share an experience with those they cover. Thus, research needs to delve into that human-level, emotion-oriented reporting and its implications for the position of journalism post-disaster.

Summary

Every day that journalists go to work they must interpret the events and issues on which they are reporting. In doing so, they frame events through their interaction with their sources, society and their personal understanding of issues. It is a complex process that has been explained from a range of theoretical perspectives. This research is squarely placed within a sociological tradition of news production.

Even in routine news work journalists will face situations that are challenging not just on a professional level, but also on a personal one. Studies on the extent to which journalists are affected by trauma have largely focused on the psychological impact, which is important, but not to the same degree on how their news judgement is altered. In many cases that research focuses on trauma as an individual experience that is not part of a collective event. This study argues for a different approach, arguing that during natural disasters local journalists may be part of a collective trauma, which affects their news judgement. While still recognising that journalists write their stories as part of a complex mix of sociological factors, this research says that in times of crisis journalists take on a participatory role as central actors in the disaster response effort by providing the key cultural narrative for the event. This narrative is emotive because of the collective trauma that local journalists share with their audience.

The walls of journalistic detachment are broken down in such events through the shared experience of trauma and as such journalists' relationships with their sources and their community will be altered. Journalists are participants in the disaster - and will recognise themselves as such - and combined with their position as a "carrier group" they are central to building a communal understanding of the Christchurch earthquake.

As noted, primarily, the theory of collective trauma suggests journalists' news selection will be framed in the context of their own disaster experience (they are victims too and central actors in the response), their recognition of a collective suffering and their responsibility to help other people (through their reporting and on a personal level), the acknowledgement that their orientation or relationship to the community and sources has changed (journalists are likely to see themselves as closer to their audience and more representative of their needs).

The theory of news framing provides a tool to analyse how the Canterbury earthquake affected journalists' news judgement. Journalistic frames are the first step in the process of news content. A study of Christchurch reporters' personal narratives, in the form of semi-structured interviews, will shed light on their personal experiences and the influences on their framing of the February 22nd earthquake. The aim of this research is to expand knowledge of news selection, source use and framing by concentrating on the nexus of journalism and trauma - an area of scholarship that is growing. How do journalists negotiate that difficult set of roles required by their professional practices at a time when they are dealing with personal trauma and interacting with a community coping with a major disaster? How does working in such conditions alter their news selection, use of sources and framing of stories? A theory of collective trauma, this thesis argues, can help to explain why journalists do not stand apart from what, and whom, they are covering in a disaster. The researcher hopes the study can contribute to a greater understanding of how collective trauma affects news content for the training of journalists and those already in the profession.

Methodology

Before starting this study, consideration was given to the best methods for producing credible results. First, a qualitative approach was decided upon to analyse interviews with reporters because it allows for a contextual and inductive analysis of journalists' narratives about their earthquake experiences and the impact on their work. Because this study focuses on people's experiences and drawing meaning from them, a qualitative approach is more suitable for assessing the role of collective trauma in influencing journalists' reporting. The research design was shaped according to the study's goal of reaching a greater understanding of how journalists respond to a traumatic event in their own city. Such a design must take account of journalists' personal and professional experiences and the methodology reflects an attempt to construct a research approach that contributes to the understanding of collective trauma's influence on news selection.

Qualitative techniques have long been acknowledged by scholars, especially in the social sciences, as suitable for the study of media and communication issues. Flick (2007:ix) says qualitative methods try to "unpick how people construct the world around them, what they are doing or what is happening to them in terms that are meaningful and that offer rich insight". For Kvale (2007:x) qualitative research tries to understand "the world out there" and "to describe and sometimes explain social phenomena 'from the inside' in a number of different ways". Those methods include analysing experiences of individuals or groups, analysing interactions, communications and documents.

Using qualitative methods allows the researcher to design a project with individuals and their experiences in mind (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Specifically, qualitative methods are appropriate for this thesis because they enable the researcher to investigate the perspectives of journalists (Flick, 2007) and inductively draw meaning from their

experiences. The research approach taken will be guided by the notion of constructionism, which acknowledges that “realities we study are social products of the actors, of interactions and institutions” (ibid: 12). Such an approach reflects the core tenets of sociological attempts to understand news production and content.

This thesis uses two types of data-gathering techniques to answer the questions posed - semi-structured in-depth interviews and a content analysis of coverage from local newspaper *The Press*. The quantitative data collected via the content analysis will be compared with that from the semi-structured interviews and compared to promote greater quality in the qualitative research (Flick, 2007). Mixed methods are often used by qualitative researchers to provide greater validity for their findings (Flick, 2007, Kvale, 2007, Denscombe, 2010).

Five broad questions have been used to guide this research:

- 1 How did Christchurch-based journalists cope personally with an earthquake disaster in their city?
- 2 How did the earthquakes affect journalists’ news judgement?
- 3 How did the earthquakes affect journalists’ use of, and attitude to, sources?
- 4 How did journalists frame their experiences?
- 5 How did earthquakes affect journalists’ view of their role in society?

These questions evolved from the literature review and are specifically tied to the notion that collective trauma places journalists and their personal experiences within a web of interactions that affect their journalism practice. Collective trauma suggests journalists’ news selection after a disaster will be framed in the context of their own disaster experience (they are victims too and central actors in the response), their recognition of a collective suffering and their responsibility to help other people (through their reporting and on a personal level), the acknowledgement that their

orientation or relationship to the community and sources has changed - journalists are likely to see themselves as closer to their audience and more representative of their needs. The literature review, then, clarified that to understand how the news is reported in a post-disaster environment the research must consider journalists' personal experiences of the event and the consequent impact for their attachment, or otherwise, to the story, and what that means for news selection, reporters' relationship with sources and their sense of purpose. As such, the broad questions above help to direct this research in a meaningful way and act as guide for the study's design.

Interview process

Qualitative researchers can use many techniques including surveys and written responses to draw information from study participants. In this study, one-on-one interviews were chosen as the tool to gather data from Christchurch reporters because this study's emphasis is on journalists' experiences. Denscombe (2010: 173-174) says: "When the researcher needs to gain insights into things such as people's opinions, feelings, emotions and experiences, then interviews will almost certainly provide a more suitable method - a method that is attuned to the intricacy of the subject matter." The use of interviews allows the researcher a degree of flexibility to delve deeper where issues arise that might not otherwise be possible with written responses and surveys. A strength of qualitative interviews is the extensive material they provide, although "generalisability is sometimes a problem" (Wimmer & Dominick, 1997:100). Because the interviews can be informal, some participants may choose to answer a question in greater detail than others. Nonetheless, these problems can be managed by developing a consistent approach to the interviews.

Because this research is phenomenological in nature - it is based on the lived experiences of journalists and interprets their narratives by drawing meaning from one-on-one interviews with them - an interview-based collection of data provided the

greatest scope for participants to tell their stories. Within social science, a phenomenological approach allows a scholar to focus on how people experience the world. The interview-based approach also fits well with the author's training as a journalist and allows for observation of those taking part. Wimmer and Dominick (1997:157) note the benefit of one-on-one interviews is that it may allow for the retrieval of information without the need to directly ask for it. Given the relatively small sample of this study, interviews also provided a greater opportunity to maximise the data collected.

Flick (2007:80) notes sampling for interviews is often done with the aim of "finding the right people - those who have made the experience relevant for the study". Kvale (2007) says sampling in interviewing refers to finding the right people and also the right parts in material they provide. The interview part of this study sampled professional journalists working and living in Christchurch. Thirty-three journalists took take part - a 90 per cent acceptance rate for those approached.

The selection of participants took place after contacting local newsrooms across print, radio and television for details of staff working at the time of the February 22nd earthquake. Prospective participants were invited by email or phone to take part in the study. The list of journalists interviewed does not cover all those who worked in Christchurch at the time, but reflects those available for in-person interviews. The make-up of that group will be discussed shortly.

Kvale (2007) says the exact number of interviewees required for a study depends on the nature of research. For example, a biographical study may require just one interview, whereas a consideration of political trends might require hundreds. In this instance, the researcher stopped at 33 participants because of two concerns. The weight of the material provided meant recording more data would have raised questions about the ability of one person to analyse the material. Second, there is a degree of

diminishing return as more interviews are conducted and journalists' experiences and opinions start to appear similar. A greater number of interviews would not necessarily add to the validity of the research (Weiss, 1995).

The semi-structured interviews are exploratory and allowed the researcher to canvas a clear set of issues to capture a "conversation where knowledge is produced through the interaction between interviewer and interviewee" (Kvale, xvii). Applying a semi-structured interview template allows for both uniformity and a degree of flexibility, letting the researcher delve into issues as they arise for individuals and to probe their answers.

The researcher composed a series of questions for participants with the aim of drawing out themes that indicate the journalistic frames from which reporters approach their work during a natural disaster - in this case the February 22nd Christchurch earthquake. The questions were drafted after comparison to related work by Roberts (2007) and Usher (2009), after discussion with the researcher's academic advisers and insight garnered from the literature in general. The questions were also crafted after consideration of the five broad research questions guiding the study and the need to draw out reporters' personal stories.

Roberts' questions included: What were some of your challenges in covering Hurricane Katrina during the week of the storm; how did you overcome those challenges; how has covering Hurricane Katrina impacted how you approach your work a year later; what role did the Internet play during the storm and what role does it play now; to what degree does your own personal experience of being affected by Hurricane Katrina impact your news coverage and how do you mix the two or separate them; what specific things do you do differently as a result of experiencing Hurricane Katrina that you didn't do before the storm with regards to your reporting; and what

changes have you seen or experienced in your work or in your news organisation as a result of Katrina?

Roberts' questions are, in some ways, similar to those listed below for this research. However, this research took a different approach with regard to a more specific focus on the journalists' personal experiences and their ability to cope with trauma post-earthquake. This study - because of the focus on collective trauma - asked questions about Christchurch journalists' relationship with sources and the families of earthquake victims, which Roberts did not in interviews after Hurricane Katrina. This researcher was also, because of his journalistic background, aware of the need to keep questions as short and focused as possible. So, in some instances where the questions are similar to those used by Roberts they have been condensed. However, Roberts' questions did provide a useful tool to help guide the formation of questions in this study.

In her study, Usher (2009) asked questions regarding the community response toward local newspaper journalists, views on local versus national coverage, reporters' perceptions of public service, their own role at the paper, and the role of paper in the society. The questions in this research regarding reporters' views on the media's role in society can be attributed to the approach taken by Usher. Usher did not ask specific questions about news selection of interviewees, which this research does. Usher's research did draw out answers regarding journalists feeling part of the disaster story they were covering. In this study, a question about the personal impact of the earthquake and journalists' key memories of the day is used to assess the extent to which journalists become part of the disaster story.

Therefore, the interview questions used in this study are a mix of this author's own initiative and adaptation of queries used by previous researchers in the disaster news field. As such, they represent a considered attempt to draw out information that relates to the theory of collective trauma and to assess its influence on reporters. The first two

interviews were initially treated as pilots for the rest of the study with minor adjustments to the listed questions.

The interview questions used for this research were:

- 1) What are your key memories of February 22 ?
- 2) How much independence did you have to pick the stories you did and their angles?
- 3) Do you think news editors had the right news priorities? What were those priorities and what are they now?
- 4) What stories/photos are you most proud of and why?
- 5) Do you approach news stories differently now?
- 6) How has your home and personal life been affected - what effect has this had on your news selection and what you write about?
- 7) How did you cope?
- 8) Did the quakes change how you interviewed/dealt with victims/friends/family?
- 9) Has your use of sources changed?
- 10) Has the way you approach your round changed since the quakes?
- 11) Has your view of journalists'/newspaper's role in society changed?

The questions recognise that journalists' news decisions are formed as part of a complex sociological phenomenon that includes their personal experience, relationship to sources and society, and that they must construct their stories within the bounds of their professional routines and practices (Berkowitz 1997). For example, questions six and seven acknowledge that journalists have their own experiences of the Canterbury earthquake, which may factor into their news decisions. Whereas, questions two and three are useful because they will highlight what role, or otherwise, professional journalistic routine had on news selection. Questions eight and nine help to draw out answers regarding journalist's perception of their relationship to society.

The questions, taken as a whole, reflect the perspective taken by Schudson (2003) and many communications scholars with regard to news being a social construction of reality, formed through a web of interactions, with the power to reflect and influence the way communities see themselves. The questions position the respondents as more than just workers in media organisations. They had more than the role of “journalist” to fill post-earthquake. For example, they might answer a question as a journalist, but also from the perspective of an earthquake-affected resident. The questions, therefore, are aligned to Goffman’s notion of footing, where participants can realign themselves through their answers. Participants’ answers are likely to show the boundaries between those professional and personal reference points merging. The questions also reflect the notion that collective trauma is fostered through a series of complex interactions between journalists and the community of which they are a part. The questions were also posed in a manner that avoided, where possible, shaping respondents’ replies. Semi-structured interviews are often valued for such an approach because of the degree of flexibility they provide while ensuring key questions for the research are covered.

Interview group

The selection of journalists to take part in this study was based on a need to get a balance across key local media forms and outlets, a sample of men and women close to the journalist population and to reflect different levels of news experience, age and seniority from junior reporters to newsroom managers.

The makeup of the Christchurch media at the time of the earthquake shall be briefly discussed. Christchurch has one daily newspaper, *The Press*, owned by Fairfax Media, an Australian-based media company. That newsroom is by far the biggest in the city. One local television station, CTV, provided coverage of Christchurch issues. National broadcasters TV3 and TV One had bureau offices in Christchurch, which answered to their central offices in Auckland. Several large radio outlets operated bureaux in

Christchurch including publicly-funded broadcaster Radio New Zealand, and privately-owned Newstalk ZB and Radio Works. Alongside these groups was a host of smaller outlets that did not form part of this research because they did not have regular bulletins or publish daily.

Hollings et al (2007) in their survey of 514 New Zealand journalists found 70 per cent (n=185) of full-time reporters were women, whereas women accounted for half of subeditors (n=23) and 40 per cent of managers (n=55). Women account for 55 per cent of all journalists in that survey. The sample for this study differs from Hollings et al with regard to the number of women taking part. The interview group included 22 men and 11 women. The oldest participant was 57 and the youngest 23. Women were well represented in the younger cohort of 21 to 30-year-olds with four women and three men in that group. The Hollings survey showed the number of women working in journalism was higher than men in the 20-35 age group. There were four women and six men in the 31-40 bracket, two women and six men in the 41-50 age group and one woman and seven men in the 51-60 age group. The average age of participants was 40 - the average age in the Hollings study was 39 - the average work experience 17.1 years, with the longest time in journalism 40 years and the shortest just a year. The possible reason for fewer women in the older age bracket is hard to pinpoint - of the seven newsroom managers, who tended to be in the older age group, two were women. The difference in numbers could be related to changing career and family life priorities as women move into their 30s.

In total 21 print and 12 broadcast (radio and television) journalists participated in the study. Of these, six were newspaper photographers (all were men), one was a television cameraman, 8 managers - i.e. editors, bureau chief, chief reporter, deputy editor, illustrations editor, assistant editor. The reporters involved covered rounds including crime, health, council, politics and social issues. The broadcast journalists, because they worked in smaller newsrooms, tended to be more generalist rather than rounds

focused. Broadcast journalists were included in the sample to see if there were any differences between their experiences and those from a print background. There weren't significant differences, giving further validity to the methodology. More than 80 percent of the journalists approached agreed to take part in the study. Those who chose not to offered reasons including they were not interested or could not make the time.

The heavy slant towards print media reflects that *The Press* newspaper has the biggest newsroom in Christchurch. It may also be indicative of this researcher's greater connections with print media as a current newspaper journalist with links to that sector of the industry. However, the researcher was careful to avoid any apparent bias affecting this study and worked hard to ensure the broadcast media were well represented. The researcher kept a diary of thoughts and ideas regarding this study, noting where possible preconceptions might affect the interviewing process and consequent analysis of data. No matter the links this researcher has with the media industry, what Stake (2003) contends is worth noting: the researcher must still ultimately decide what is significant and what is not.

The interviews took place from late April 16, 2012, to June 5 that year. All were digitally recorded and then transcribed by the researcher. The digital copies were destroyed after the interviews were transcribed and checked as the researcher found participants were more likely to be open and honest if they knew their voice recordings would be erased. The bulk of the interviews took place in meeting rooms at the participants' workplaces. Two took place at the homes of the interviewees, two at the researcher's office and four in public places including cafes.

The interviews varied in duration with the shortest of 30 minutes with 2699 words to transcribe and the longest one hour 16 minutes long with 5916 words of transcription. The total audio recorded was 23.5 hours, amounting to 125,895 words or an average

interview length of 42 minutes and 31 seconds and average word count of 3815. Each interviewee was asked to sign consent forms and identify whether they would be named in this research or given a pseudonym (only two people declined to be named). The researcher's interview and research plan was granted approval by the University of Canterbury's Human Ethics Committee (see Appendix 3). After each interview the researcher wrote a memo to describe briefly how the interview went, identifying any apparent positive or negatives with regard to the interaction with the subject or problems with the questioning. The memos did not raise any major issues, but provided the benefit of keeping the researcher alert to any perceived problems with the interview process.

The author also noted if there was any prior relationship with the interviewee. In some cases the interviewer had previously worked alongside those taking part (this issue will be discussed at greater length later in the ethical concerns section of this chapter). Hesse-Bieber and Leary (2010) note memos help to maintain a consistency in qualitative research approaches thereby contributing to the credibility of results. The final part of the interview process was to send a copy of the transcripts to participants for them to check or make additions to their answers, thus helping to ensure the accuracy of the data.

Case stories

The analysis of interview data by qualitative researchers can take several forms but all aim to draw meaning from the narratives provided (Denscombe, 2010). This study treated the interview data in two ways. First, because of the nature of the February earthquake and the fascinating stories that the researcher encountered when interviewing journalists, it was decided a selection of those interviews should be considered at greater length.

A chapter of this study is dedicated to the discussion of six journalists' interviews - two print journalists, one print photographer, one television journalist, one radio journalist and an interview with a senior newsroom manager. Each person's experience is discussed at length with key moments and quotes from the interviews highlighted. The aim is to place reporters' experiences in context, enhance the relevance and validity of this research and improve its readability not just for an academic audience but for those working in the media or journalism training. Weiss (1995: 168) states that focusing on case stories helps to "make the reader aware of the respondents' experience within the context of their lives" and "understand the concrete more easily" than a less holistic approach.

Stake (2003) notes case stories, or studies, are organised around a small number of research questions, which highlight specific issues and themes. These issues and themes "invite attention to the ordinary experience" of individuals (Stake 2003:142). The case stories chapter in this study is embedded in the notion that "storytelling" is an important cultural and sociological tool for interpreting issues and themes (ibid). By discussing in detail a select number of journalists' stories the researcher can learn from the particular case, which can then be compared to the narratives of other journalists. In this way, individual statements and stories gain depth and provide a picture of the wider experience for Christchurch reporters. As such the researcher will select what is most important from the journalists' stories, highlighting differences and similarities between them. Stake (ibid:144) concludes:

Even though the competent researcher will be guided by what the case somehow indicates is most important, even though patrons, other researchers, and those researched will advise, what is necessary for an understanding of the case will be decided by the researcher. What results may be the case's own story, but the report will be the researcher's dressing of the case's own story. This is not to dismiss the aim of finding the story

that best represents the case but to remind the reader, that, usually, the researcher ultimately decides criteria for representation.

Underpinning the case story chapter is the researcher's belief that this study must have practical applications to the journalism industry in New Zealand (and elsewhere). Taking such an approach is worthwhile because it helps to build a more rounded understanding of interviewees' experiences outside of a purely academic and scientific mode of discussion (Kvale, 2007, Weiss, 1995). In saying that, the case stories are not just an exercise in making this project more accessible to the non-academic reader. They inform the key parts of this research relating to the reporters' role in a collective trauma and their use of journalistic frames in a disaster. As such, the case studies will help identify themes and issues to explore in more depth in the latter parts of this thesis in the results chapter. The benefit of the case studies is that they provide a close look at how individuals dealt with their earthquake experience and enable a comparison between them. They also set the scene for the concentrated discussion of the key themes found in the analysis of all the interview data.

The case studies were chosen as follows. After reading all the transcripts and coding them for themes - at a point where the author had built up intimate knowledge of each transcript - the researcher selected one person from each medium to highlight any differences between them and to provide balance. The print photographer was selected because of the need for a focus on images as opposed to only words. The interviews were selected for several reasons: their power to provide a cross-section of experiences on the day of the quake; the participants' open and frank answers to difficult questions; and the participants' willingness to be reflective about the impact of the earthquake on their work. The case stories chapter sits alongside, and provides context for, data coding for over-arching themes from the research.

Interview analysis

The second method of analysis used for the interview data was the technique of inductive coding. An inductive approach was used to analyse the recorded interview data in a bid to construct meaning from the interviews. Inductive approaches are valid for constructing meaning from lived experiences (Schwandt, 2003, Rowley, 2002). The use of an inductive method to identify journalistic frames is where this research differs from other studies that applied pre-determined frames, including Roberts (2007) and Brunken (2006).

Roberts used Semetko and Valkenburg's (2000) five generic frames from their study of how television and newspapers framed the 1997 European heads of state Amsterdam meeting on the strengthening of the European Union. These comprise the conflict frame, economic consequences frame, human interest frame, morality frame and the attribution of responsibility frame. While these frames may appear in some form in this study the goal is not to use a deductive approach, such as that used by Semetko and Valkenburg, because the journalistic frames will emerge from the interview material. It is also important not to assume that things in the literature will be of significance for this study -the literature has had little to say about the role of collective trauma in influencing journalism practice.

At this point it is also important to note that within framing scholarship researchers have found it useful to delineate between issue-specific frames and generic frames (de Vreese et al, 2001). Issue-specific frames are focused on specific topic or event - such as the 1991 Iraq war (Dimitrova, 2005). Generic frames are identifiable across a range of issues. However, this study is not focused on audience understanding of frames in news stories post-earthquake, which would be a valuable piece of research. For instance, Kahneman and Tversky's 1984 experiments showed when the media allies a

frame with the cost of a particular course of action along a more favourable outcome then audiences will prefer that option (ibid: 343).

In this study, the journalistic frames are thought to be influenced by the reporters' individual trauma experience and their interactions with the wider community. Therefore, the interviews were transcribed by the researcher and coded for common themes identified in the texts from significant quotations. The overarching themes that emerge from this process are a contributing factor to the journalistic frames underpinning Christchurch reporters' news selection after the February 22nd earthquake.

The coding process follows that suggested by King and Horrocks (2010) and Kvale (2007) for interview data - it is a system that has been used in various forms by many social science scholars and is embedded in a grounded theory approach first mooted by Glaser and Strauss (1967). Denscombe (2010) notes qualitative researchers must acknowledge it is not possible for them to present all their collected data, but rather focus on the key parts of the material. Coding provides a structured way in which to guide the selection of important issues. King and Horrocks (2010: 150) note thematic coding is used to refer to patterns in data that reveal something of interest regarding the topic at hand. "Themes are recurrent and distinctive features of the participants' accounts, characterising particular perceptions and/or experiences, which the researcher sees as relevant to the research question." Thematic coding has been used effectively in other qualitative media studies of journalists and traumatic experiences by Usher (2009), Himmelstein and Faithorn (2002) and Berrington and Jemphrey (2003).

First, each transcript was read in its entirety to reach greater understanding of the data and help the researcher to place individual passages within the context of the whole interview. Second, quotes that helped identify the participants' views, earthquake

experiences and perceptions in relation to their news judgement and relationship to society were identified by their page and line number in the interview and recorded on a spreadsheet. A condensed descriptive summary of the quote was then recorded in the next column on the same spreadsheet. Each summary was then condensed further into a descriptive phrase as in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Example of descriptive coding

Page	Line	Comment	Descriptive
OC			
2	17-20	Crying as she walked into Cashel Mall because of damage and scene	Upset by quake and damage
2	25-30	Saw elderly man with walker and didn't know whether to stop and help him or continue on	Reporter unsure about helping old man v need to report
3	15-18	Saw first body being lifted from rubble by people	Reporter sees dead person
3	18-23	Didn't know whether to get a blanket and cover dead and sit by them or continue working	R unsure about helping people v need to report
4	4 to 10	stops to help friend who is badly injured and can't sit up	R stops reporting to help friend
4	9 to 13	Tells colleague not to film injured friend	R protects friend's privacy

6	30-34	Didn't know whether to ask victims' families watching rescue for comment	Difficult to approach victims' families/tough ethical decision
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Once descriptive phrases were identified within an entire transcript the researcher re-read the material to see if some could be merged where there was overlap between them (King and Horrocks, 2010). The researcher then moved on to the next transcript and used the same descriptive codes where appropriate, or defined new ones. In this study, the researcher went back through all the transcripts up to six times to check the descriptive coding and reduce overlap and build consistency. The researcher stopped this process when the descriptive codes could be condensed no further.

The descriptive codes were then grouped together alphabetically on a spreadsheet to aid the next stage of the process - interpretive coding. King and Horrocks (2010) note this stage of the coding process is used to condense the descriptive codes by interpreting their meaning and grouping together with those that share common traits. The researcher went through the alphabetical list of nearly 800 descriptive codes three times and applied interpretive codes - adjusting them where necessary on the second and third analysis to produce interpretive codes as in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Example of interpretive coding:

Descriptive coding alphabetical	Interpretive coding
Focused on capturing affect on people's lives	people's experiences matter
Focused on challenges people face	people's experiences matter
Focused on emotional impact of quake	emotion impt to coverage
Focused on helping people	Journalism helps community/people

During the interpretive coding stage the researcher referred back to the interview transcripts where necessary to inform the process. A small number of descriptive codes that did not, on reassessment, prove applicable to the research design were removed. It should be noted that it is possible for a descriptive theme to relate to more than one interpretive code (King and Horrocks, 2010). In such instances, two or more interpretive codes were applied.

After completing the interpretive coding, the researcher then placed them in a separate spreadsheet and again alphabetically listed them to aid analysis for overarching themes. Twenty-two common themes were present. Two interpretive codes were abandoned at this point (“science matters” and “medium restricts coverage”) because they were not common enough. Two themes, “coped with personal trauma” and “experienced personal trauma”, were merged because of their similarities. As were the themes “journalism helps people” and “journalism helps the community” because of their similarities. The researcher was left with 18 interpretive codes.

Those 18 codes were then condensed into four over-arching themes to form the basis of the journalistic frames in post-quake Christchurch. Those four themes comprise: reporters as advocate; journalists are personally part of story; attached to audience; and ethics. Researchers differ on the suitable number of overarching themes, but suggest between two and five is an appropriate number (King and Horrocks, 2010, Kvale, 2007, Denscombe, 2010). Researchers do agree that these themes should relate directly to the theoretical ideas underpinning the study (King and Horrocks, 2010). To determine how the earthquakes affected news judgement the over-arching themes will be considered with reference to the theory of collective trauma and journalistic framing.

Content analysis

The last part of this research involved a quantitative content analysis of news stories. Collective trauma theory suggests that a content analysis of news stories should find that articles produced in the post-earthquake environment are more likely to reflect journalists' personal experiences, their attachment to the event and those affected. The collective trauma, then, is likely to have an influence on their news selection, their use of sources and the messages, or frames, which can be identified in news stories. Content analysis is a tool to identify any measurable change with regard to those factors in published items.

In using content analysis, the aim was to build a research method that helps to record and describe the impact of the February 22 earthquake on Christchurch journalists' reporting. The content analysis in this study was designed to test whether the major themes that emerged in the interview process could be connected to how journalists framed their news stories. Because it was grounded in the key themes that emerged from the interviews, the content analysis design was focused on the influence of journalists' earthquake experiences on their journalism practice and does not necessarily cover the gambit of issues ranging from editorial policies to daily analysis of news room practices by the media. Nor does it pretend to provide a data-based psychological analysis of why certain frames appear and others do not. The literature review noted that was not the intent of this study. Those important factors are left for other researchers to investigate. The key task is to identify the extent to which journalistic frames can be influenced by reporters' connection to the story they are covering. Collective trauma suggests that journalists' experiences during and after the February 22 earthquake should be a significant influence on their reportage and relationships with sources. Content analysis was chosen to assess news story frames because it is a long-recognised and well-tested method for analysing messages in media communications.

Berger (2000) describes content analysis as a research technique for the systematic study and description of communication content, which may involve quantitative or qualitative analysis, or both. Elsewhere, researchers define content analysis as a means for providing data that can be reproduced with valid deductions for the material (Krippendorff 1980). Neuendorf (2002) says the use of content analysis has been growing as a research tool over the past 50 years and it is applicable to many areas of investigation including the study of newspaper coverage. In this study a content analysis entails a systematic approach to reading the texts and images in *The Press* news coverage over several periods in pre and post-quake Christchurch. The content analysis in this study is an objective attempt to make deductions from news stories regarding the impact of a disaster on local journalists' news selection and use of sources. The content analysis was designed in a way that attempted to meet the requirement of replicability in results (Krippendorff 1980). The intra and inter-coder tests discussed later in this chapter suggest that requirement for replicability was met.

Berelson (1971) notes that content analysis mainly focuses on manifest content in media messages, therefore boosting the reliability of interpretation and coding. Manifest content relates to the easily understood or recognised messages as opposed to latent content which is not as visible, but can emerge from the texts. In this study, a mix of manifest and latent content is measured in the content analysis in line with the interview themes discussed above.

Content analysis has its limitations, which are important to acknowledge. One of the key limitations is that different researchers may develop different rules for coding, therefore limiting findings "to the framework of the categories and definitions used in the analysis" (Wimmer & Dominick, 1997, p 115). Neuendorf (2002) notes that although content analysis must meet the rules for good science it is the researcher who makes the decisions about the complexity and design of the analysis. Other researchers can disagree with that design, but the point is that any content analysis should have a

degree of objectivity and reliability. Obviously, content analysis on its own does not explain the news production process or how stories came to be, or why journalists chose one issue for prominence over others. In this study the interviews act to shed light on how journalists came to write the stories they did.

Therefore, once the interview coding was completed a content analysis was carried out on digitally archived editions of *The Press* newspaper. At the start of coding the process the researcher intended to use a constructed-week method over a six-week period, however, this approach was adapted to capture a greater number of stories, as explained below. The aim of the coding process was to identify whether the journalistic frames identified in the interview process appear in published stories in any form and to what extent. Collective trauma suggests the frames will appear in the news stories in some form because local media act as carriers of the trauma, reflecting their own and the community's response to the event.

The Press is the largest daily paper in the South Island with a circulation of circa 80,000. It is based in Christchurch and has the largest local newsroom of any news organisation in the city. A content analysis is useful because it can provide data from a selection of texts sharing a common thread (Berger 2000). The researcher did not undertake a content analysis of broadcast media for two primary reasons. The first relates to a lack of resource - one scholar can only achieve so much in a certain time-frame. Second, *The Press*' staff represented the majority of participants in this study so any content analysis should include their work.

In order to assess any change in news judgement, a comparative approach was necessary. Therefore, the researcher identified periods pre and post-quake to study frames in news stories. The first six-week bracket was chosen as a period to illustrate how events and issues were reported in a time of "routine news". The second period was chosen to allow comparisons between coverage of the non-lethal September 4

quake and with that of February's deadly shake. The immediate post-earthquake period was chosen because it forms the background for the interviews in this research. Finally, the last six-week period was chosen because it leads up to the second anniversary of the earthquake sequence's start and because it provided a sufficient time from the February 2011 event for a more "routine news" environment to develop.

The researcher started by coding pages one, three and four of *The Press* for six weeks leading up to the beginning of the Canterbury earthquake sequence on September, 4, 2010, six weeks after September 4, six weeks from the February 22 earthquake and six weeks leading up to September 2012 using the constructed week method. Krippendorff and Bock (2009) and Riffe, Aust and Lacy (2009) have found constructed week sampling provides an efficient and accurate method of data collection. However, because of the nature of the newspapers immediately after the September and February earthquakes, bigger pictures and stories were used than is the norm so the quantity of stories was not high enough for analytical purposes. Therefore, the coder increased the sample size ($n=409$) by coding every day for the first week of each period. For the February period the researcher also coded page 2 of the newspaper in the first week post-quake to boost the sample size. After the February quake, *The Press* was limited to an "emergency-style paper" for some time, which limited the size of the paper. Also, given the nature of the event, the newspaper made greater use of big illustrations and graphics to detail events alongside large stories so there are some limits on comparability between the periods.

News story coding

First, each news story was coded for a primary subject, date, page number and whether a photograph or graphic was part of the item. Stories were not coded for length as they were supplied as PDF images and counting the number of words would have been punitively time consuming. Those subjects included crime, national politics, local body

politics, education, entertainment, environment, health, economy/finance, property, consumer affairs, sport, social issues, other and earthquake. These subject areas follow the general journalistic rounds system used by most New Zealand newspapers with the addition of the earthquake category.

A series of questions was developed and adapted, after testing coding on 50 preliminary stories, to help the researcher identify the four journalistic frames, inductively found from the interviews, in news stories. The researcher first considered the questions used by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) to assess their five generic frames in news stories. These provided useful guidance on what structure the questions could take, especially with regard to helping the coder identify frames. However, because this study used an inductive approach to the interview data, the researcher decided to develop a range of coding questions compatible with that method rather than using predetermined queries constructed by other scholars.

Therefore, the researcher read the 20 initial stories for coding, making notes about possible questions to guide the identification of frames. While doing this, the researcher referred to the interview transcripts, the interpretive themes that emerged from the interviews and the overarching frames. Through this process, questions were inductively developed, tested, eliminated or added until a series of consistent questions emerged that aided the identification of frames in news stories. This approach is akin to that advocated by Glaser and Strauss (1967:48) in their seminal work on grounded theory and allows the researcher to “continually adjust his control of data collection to ensure the data’s relevance to the impersonal criteria of his emerging theory”. As Glaser and Strauss (*ibid*: 103) contend, this kind of “constant comparative method” allows “with discipline, for the vagueness and flexibility that aid the creative generation of theory”.

The coding questions, therefore, reflect the interview transcripts, the interpretive themes developed from them and each over-arching frame, which were defined accordingly:

- 1) Reporter as advocate frame: does the story suggest it is the media's role to advocate for readers and help them find solutions to problems? The interpretive themes that help to explain this frame include: journalists acting as recovery watchdog; recording history; recognition that journalism helps people/community; only quake news is important; positive stories are best; conflict with officials; and officials helpful.

The questions for this frame include: Does the story (includes photo and caption) suggest problems with the earthquake response (city-wide or regard to individuals, their personal/property and business need); Does the story suggest ways to help a family, group and community solve an issue/problem; Does the story call for international help; Does the story suggest officials are not helping people/performing and wrongly restricting access to parts of the city or withholding information; Does the story suggest officials are taking the right course of action for the community/city?

- 2) Journalists are personally part of the story: stories suggest that reporters cannot separate their own experiences from the story they are covering. The interpretive themes that help to explain this frame include acknowledgement that journalists are part of the story, they coped with personal trauma, their family/personal life was affected, and that they experience quake fatigue because of the personal and professional pressures of their work.

The questions for this frame include: does the story use personal pronouns when mentioning the reporter/media outlet; is the reporter/photographer mentioned in

the story; are the reporter's family/friends/colleagues/ mentioned in the story; does the story include a photo of the reporter/photographer; is the story embedded in emotional discourse about the reporter's experiences (for example use of emotive adjectives)?

- 3) Journalists are attached to audience: stories suggest a strong bond between journalists and their audience, reflecting the notion that reporters have a greater understanding for what the public/people of Christchurch experience. The stories will emphasise the human and emotional aspect of an issue and a bond with sources. The interpretive themes that help to explain this frame include journalists being closer to their audience, community is important, and a greater empathy for victims, people's experiences matter and outside media annoy.²

The questions for this frame include: does the story detail the personal experiences/lives of those in the article; does the story contain visual content or use comments that generate feelings of outrage, empathy, sympathy, caring, or compassion for actors/victims; does the story suggest shared community values (for example caring/helping people who are worse off/solidarity/stoicism/can do attitude); does the story suggest the media/journalists are part of the community; does the story use euphemisms to describe death/injury/suffering; does the story use emotional adjectives/discourse to describe people's reactions to events/issues; does the story use

² Outside media annoy is an interesting category as it reflects some local reporters' distaste for the practices of reporters who flew into Christchurch after the earthquake, especially those from other countries. Although the theme is apparent in the interview analysis it is not expected to appear in the news story frames and journalistic routine and professional practices regarding relationships with other media are likely to prevent such a frame appearing in stories to any great extent.

the possessive pronoun “our” with regard to the city/community/neighbourhood? ;
 does the story suggest outside media created problems?

- 4) Ethics: Stories suggest journalists faced decisions about how to act, personally or professionally, when covering a news story. The interpretive theme that helps to explain this frame is ethical dilemmas.

The questions for this category include: does the story suggest the media/journalists faced tough decisions about what to report or how to do their job; does the story suggest the media made the wrong decision about coverage; does the story defend media coverage of a story; does the story highlight a situation that could be considered ethically challenging for journalists (ie whether to stop and help an injured person; the use of death knocks; close relationships to those involved)?

The ethics category is not a frame per se as are the other categories. The ethics category was the hardest for which to construct questions because ethical dilemmas are not necessarily something that will appear in news stories as a frame. Journalists are unlikely to explicitly mention their ethical challenges in stories. Nonetheless, given many of the interviewees discussed the ethical challenges they faced, and the power for such circumstances to influence what is covered in a news story, the researcher developed the last question for an ethics category as a means of highlighting those situations in news stories where journalists were placed in difficult situations. The general shake-up of journalism after the earthquake and extreme situations that journalists found themselves operating in would suggest that ethical reflection about their role is a sign of transparent and reflexive reporting and not just that they were simply operating from the outside looking in at the event. There were several situations, from the pilot coding of stories, where reporters obviously faced tough ethical decisions about whether to report what they were seeing or stop to help others.

Given the grounded theory approach to the newspaper coding, the researcher felt it was still worthwhile to test whether the ethics frame could be identified in news stories in some form.

- 5) A frame of “other” was used for stories where none of the frames above were identified. Obviously, this frame is likely to be more prevalent in the pre-earthquake coding period. The “other” frame is a useful measurement tool because if it were to appear too often in the other periods it would indicate problems with the coding structure.

At this point it is worthwhile reiterating that this research does not test the audience’s understanding of news frames, rather the focus is on identifying whether the frames identified in the interviews and news stories can be explained through the prism of collective trauma. Framing researchers acknowledge that social scientists are far from a consensus on what is the best method to identify frames (Entman, Matthes, Pellicano, 2009). However, what is important for this inductive coding process is that “a frame repeatedly invokes the same objects and traits ... to promote an interpretation” of messages in news stories.

The researcher read the entire corpus of material and answered no (0) and yes (1) to the questions under any of the four frames. This approach follows that developed by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), which was adapted for use by Roberts (2007) and Brunken (2006). By adding the scores together an index was created for each frame, thereby indicating their prominence in news stories. A host of framing researchers acknowledge that more than one frame may be found in a story (Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000, Iyengar, 1991, Schudson, 2003, Entman, 1993). By taking the approach above it is hoped the salience of frames can be identified. For example, the

“reporter advocate” frame was strongest in stories when it scored 7/7 on the question index. The other frames used fewer questions, but the same principle applied.

Next, the stories were coded for sources. Berkowitz’ (1987) study on news sources and their affiliations was adapted to a New Zealand setting and used as the basis for identifying sources and their position in organisations, institutions and agencies (see appendix 1). Roberts (2007) followed a similar approach for her study of Hurricane Katrina because Berkowitz’ system helps to explain the influence of sources on news framing. Affiliated sources are identified with an organisation when quoted or referred to in a news story.

For example, a school principal discussing the impact of the Christchurch earthquake on their school is an affiliated person. However, that same person could be unaffiliated if they are quoted as a homeowner struggling to come to terms with the damage to their house and street. As Roberts (2007) notes, within Berkowitz’s sourcing codes, sources are categorised according to type of agency and position. This has the advantage of distinguishing between the role of an organisation and the source’s status. Because journalists are traditionally more inclined to place greater trust in authoritative sources (Gans, 1979, Tuchman, 1978) it is important to measure to whom a source is affiliated - i.e. government agency, business, non-government group.

Quarantelli (1996) argues that a “command post” view of events is prevalent after a disaster as journalists rely on information from those in official positions. By identifying whether a source is affiliated or non-affiliated, to which organisation they belong, and in what capacity, this position can be tested. Recording source use before and after the earthquake will shed light on journalists’ orientation to society. The use of sources, as noted, also has implications for framing as sources are part of the framing process in a news story.

Coding reliability

Wimmer and Dominick (1997) note for content analysis to be objective then it must use reliable procedures. They suggest this can be achieved through the use of a pilot study, concise coding categories and the use of trained coders. Flick (2007) and Kvale (2007) also note that consistency is key to coding. In this study the coding was performed by the author because of resource and monetary constraints. Ideally, a small team of trained coders would be used in such circumstances to help cross-check results, but it is recognised by academics that in the case of doctoral theses researchers often have to do the work on their own (Wimmer and Dominick, 1997, Kvale, 2007, Flick 2007). To reach a higher level of reliability, as noted above, the author defined the coding categories in as much detail as possible through the analysis of 50 news stories in a pilot survey. List (2002) has concluded that in research of this type a greater level of reliability can be achieved by a single coder. Nonetheless, the researcher used two methods to test the reliability of the content analysis - intra-coder reliability and inter-coder reliability. After all newspaper stories were coded (n=409), the researcher picked a random day from each coding period (26/8/10, 30/9/10, 28/3/11 and 26/7/12) and recoded those days. This approach follows that suggested by Wimmer and Dominick (1997) to test the same data twice at different times to develop comparative reliability statistics.

In total 46 stories were recoded across all categories - 11.2 per cent of total stories. Wimmer and Dominick (1997) recommend a sub-sample of between 10 and 25 per cent be tested for reliability. This approach also mirrors that used by Roberts (2007). Holsti (1969) provides a standard formula for determining coding reliability: $CR = \frac{2M}{N_1 + N_2}$, where M is the number of coding decisions on which the two coding periods/coders are in agreement, and N_1 and N_2 refer to the number of coding decisions made in period 1 and 2.

For each period the author measured the coding decisions across all source categories, and then for each individual frame. For example, on the 26/8/10 there were 11 stories recoded requiring decisions across 28 categories from date to number of sources to source status. Therefore, the coder had to make 308 decisions across those 11 stories. After the recode the formula was used thus: $CR = 2 \times 278 / 308 + 308 = 536 / 594 = .902$

The same process was followed for each framing category across each period, with the following results below in Table 3:

Table 3: Intra-coder reliability results

Intra-coder reliability	Source categories	Reporter advocate frame	Journalists part of story	Attached to audience	ethics	Other
Day:						
26/08/2010	0.902	0.852	0.863	0.845	0.954	0.987
30/09/2010	0.923	0.851	0.871	0.856	0.961	0.991
28/03/2011	0.931	0.862	0.861	0.851	0.962	0.982
26/07/2012	0.925	0.871	0.881	0.872	0.972	0.991

The strength of reliability is a point of debate for content analysis proponents. However, based on Lombard et al (2005) the strength of coding reliability is at a satisfactorily high level because coefficients of .90 or greater are always acceptable, .80 or greater is acceptable in most situations, and .70 may be appropriate in some exploratory studies.

The author also trained one other person to recode stories from four dates chosen to be different to those above in the intra-coder retesting. That person received explanation

about the coding process, the categories involved and the nature of the overall research. After instruction the coder was given a list of the appropriate interpretive codes and the coding sheeting containing the questions to identify frames. There was in-depth discussion about the applicability of the ethics category, but it was decided the measurement of stories that indicated ethically difficult situations should be carried out.

In total the second coder analysed 46 stories - 11.2 per cent of the total - with the following results after use of Holsti's formula shown in Table 4 below:

Table 4: Inter-coder reliability results

Inter-coder reliability	Source categories	Reporters advocate frame	Journalists part of story	attached to audience	ethics	Other
Day:						
10/08/2010	0.871	0.811	0.834	0.821	0.931	0.967
08/10/2010	0.882	0.814	0.829	0.825	0.922	0.961
05/04/2011	0.865	0.823	0.811	0.813	0.925	0.951
17/08/2012	0.868	0.841	0.836	0.809	0.929	0.945

Not unexpectedly, these results differ from that of the author by up to five percentage points depending on the category. The reasons for this are probably related to the author's immersion in the study at hand in comparison to the outside coder. The author will have a greater understanding of the subject matter, interpretive themes and the condition that journalists faced because of his own background in the media. However, the results above still indicate a satisfactory level of reliability. Krippendorff (1980) says that a reliability co-efficient of above 80 per cent is good and from 67-79 per cent acceptable. Elsewhere, Riffe et al (1998) state that values below 70 per cent are

difficult to reliably interpret. All the intercoder results are about the 80 percentile so therefore reach a good level.

Ethical Issues

The interview process for this study required the recall of difficult experiences for some of the participants. The researcher received approval from (see letter in Appendix 3) the University of Canterbury's Human Ethics Committee for this study's interview process. Before the interviews, participants were advised they could refuse to answer any of the questions posed and could withdraw at anytime, including post-interview up to the point of publication. Participants, as mentioned, were offered a transcript of their interview for review. Only in six cases were the sent-out transcripts amended by the participants to clarify detail or add extra comments that came to mind once they had read their interview. The participants were given the choice of using their real names or remaining confidential. All participants had to sign a consent form before the interview took place. The researcher provided participants with a list of counselling services before the interview started.

A key area for ethical concern relates to this researcher's journalism work over the past 15 years. The author has worked as a general news reporter, covering rounds including crime, social issues, politics and education, as a chief reporter in charge of a newsroom and a sub-editor - a role carried out from home at the time of the Christchurch earthquake for Fairfax Media and during the interview process. At the time of completing this thesis the researcher was back in *The Press*' newsroom news editing the paper daily. This latest work involves direct daily workplace interaction with some of the people who took part in this study.

Rather than being a problem, the researcher's position with Fairfax provided an in-depth understanding of the news process and earthquake coverage - both beneficial for the study. Of course, the argument could be made that the researcher is unable to

divorce himself from the events of February, 22, 2011, and the months following, but as all qualitative researchers know their studies will include some of their own voice. The key point for this scholar has been to reflect on how and when that proximity to the subject matter could lead to bias.

As a working journalist the researcher was regularly exposed to routine news stories - covering topics including murders, violence, child abuse to name a few - that would fall under the umbrella of “traumatic news coverage” in some instances. The author, on several occasions, witnessed people badly injured or dying at accidents or scenes of violence. Those experiences have helped fuel the author’s passion for a greater understanding of journalism and trauma, especially given the lack of discussion in journalism training and newsrooms about its impact on reporters.

The researcher regularly had to carry out “death knocks” - the practice of trying to get comment from the family or friends of someone who had died suddenly, often in unpleasant circumstances - and has his own opinion about how and when such coverage is important. However, rather than these experiences being a hindrance to this study they helped inform its construction and the interview process. The writer was in a strong position to draw information from interviewees because he could, on some level, understand what the journalists were talking about. The author, also, was less likely to personally judge journalists for their actions, which is often the case for those not in the media industry and who do not understand its pressures or the need to report certain difficult issues. Some journalists, in the author’s experience, are shy to talk to academics about their experiences because they feel they are being looked down upon. Scholars have acknowledged the problems in getting information from journalists because of time restraints and a lack of interest (Dahinden, 2005). The interviews conducted with local journalists for this study provide valuable information that is often difficult to obtain.

Some of the interviewees have previously worked for, alongside or in competition with the researcher. The author acknowledged these relationships where they occurred in the memos attached to the interviews and noted any perceived problems that might have arisen. It should be noted that at no point in the interviewing process did the researcher believe a subject was holding back because of a prior working relationship. Again, rather than a hindrance, the past relationships generally made the interview subjects more comfortable as they were talking to someone who is part of the media world that they inhabit. As the interview results will show there was an increased feeling among Christchurch media post-earthquake that they should help each other rather than focus on competition. The researcher's experience of the Canterbury earthquake sequence is likely to have aided the interview process because participants felt they were sharing their experiences with someone who knew, to a degree, what it was like. The writer's experience will be discussed briefly in the case stories chapter.

Case stories

Everyone who lived in Christchurch on February 22, 2011, has their own story to tell - stories that help people to explain their experience and understand what their friends, family and community have been through. In this simple way, people share their experience and contribute to a collective response to trauma (Erikson, 1978, Neal, 1998, Alexander, 2004).

Christchurch media workers sit at the nexus of journalism and collective trauma, having to report the event while dealing personally with the earthquake and its aftermath. This chapter considers the experience of five journalists who reported the February 22 quake and its aftermath. By taking an inductive approach to their stories the researcher could explore the extent to which the February 22 earthquake affected the journalists personally and professionally. As Stake (2003) contends, analysing individuals' stories opens them to interpretation by the researcher, but also helps to place them within the context of a wider group experience, allowing for comparisons and the emergence of key themes.

In detailing journalists' responses to the earthquake it must be kept in mind that they sit in a privileged position with the power to select news, choose how sources are used and therefore frame the disaster. Their approach to news will be refracted not only through their own personal experience, but that of those people with whom they interact. All the interviewees in this study displayed a strong understanding of the differences between their professional and personal identities. They were demonstrably passionate about their profession and significantly acknowledged their role in promoting the public good.

This chapter will provide evidence for assertions in the literature review relating to the theory of collective trauma's influence on journalists' news selection: Specifically, their reporting will be framed in the context of their own disaster experience (they are

victims too and central actors in the response); their recognition of a collective suffering and their responsibility to help other people (through their reporting and on a personal level); the acknowledgement that their orientation or relationship to the community and sources has changed - journalists are likely to see themselves as closer to their audience and more representative of their needs.

All the interviews for this study started with a question about journalists' experiences on February 22 because that day opens the way for discussion about the other issues for consideration. Therefore, before discussing journalists' narratives, I will break into personal pronouns to briefly explain my own experience. In doing so, I am acknowledging that "my voice" is part of this research. Denzin and Lincoln (2011:5) note that the qualitative researcher "understands that research is an interactive process shaped by one's personal history, biography, gender, social class and ethnicity". By discussing my experiences, in a self-reflexive way, I acknowledge that my own background is an influence on this study. To ignore my experiences would be equivalent to introducing bias by omission. While it might be considered self-indulgent to take such an approach, and it is not one that sits comfortably with my journalistic and short academic training, discussing my own experiences helps to place the motivations for this study in context.

The author's experience

First, like many in Christchurch, I jumped out of bed at 4.35am on Saturday, September 4, 2010, for the tremor that started the Canterbury earthquake sequence. The later and much worse February event must always be viewed in light of the several months of shaky ground which preceded it - journalists in Christchurch had already dealt with months of aftershocks. The difference between the events was their timing, location to the city and the shallow rupture that caused the death and destruction for the later, lower magnitude, quake.

I can clearly recall what happened on February 22, but in the light of what others went through, I consider my experience “run-of-the-mill”. I’d returned home from university where I was studying two law papers alongside my work for Fairfax Media. As I started to make some lunch I turned to look at my dog, which jumped up startled. A split-second later, a twisted wall of noise thumped the house. I grabbed the panicked dog and dragged him under a doorway, crawling, because it was impossible to stand up in the house. When the shaking stopped I immediately rang my wife, who was in the central city, and would normally have been out to lunch. She did not answer, because, as I found out later, her phone had flown across her office. A cricket ball had also flown off her workmate’s desk, hitting her in the head and momentarily dazing her.

I didn’t notice anything coming off the walls and shelves in our house. The terrific noise of the shaking, a mix of rumble from the ground and the wrenching of the house from side to side and up and down is what sticks in my head. However, after little over 10 seconds of violence the house was a sea of broken crockery. Everything that was on a shelf was on the floor at contorted angles - bookcases, television, the one-tonne piano. I tried to ring my twin brother, who worked at the Stuff news website in Wellington, to tell him what had happened so he could have some detail for online readers, but the cellphone system was overloaded. The home line didn’t work because there was no power. After trying to call my wife several more times I gave up and sent a text instead.

When I went to check our neighbours, I saw one woman tending to several upset children. Water was pouring up through the ground with sand (liquefaction). Another neighbour had badly injured her hand and we tried to dress that as best we could. Two other neighbours described making their way through streets clogged with water and sand from the liquefaction that had bubbled up through the ground. I then received a call from my brother, still only minutes after, and then my mother, who had felt the quake on the West Coast, 350 kilometres away. I told them what I knew, predicted the

quake was at least magnitude 7.5, and said I didn't know where or how my wife was doing. At that point they said there were reports of deaths in the city. My quotes were some of the first to appear online on Stuff, the *Sydney Morning Herald* and, from what I was told, several other international news websites. I never saw them because of the lack of power.

A couple of big aftershocks struck while I was outside - there wasn't much point being inside with an upset dog and smashed belongings. About 90 minutes after the first shake I got a text from my wife saying she was OK, not to go into the centre of town to find her and she'd be making her way home soon. I then tried to clean up some of the mess in the house, but it was almost pointless without power and running water. My wife arrived home about 45 minutes later after catching a ride in a workmate's 4WD and then walking through liquefaction with two workmates who appeared to be in shock. Her workmates took one look in the front door of our house and walked around the side of the house to an outdoor table - something that still makes me smile to this day. My wife tried to calm them as I continued cleaning up and sporadically taking cover as more tremors hit. We decided it was pointless staying in Christchurch with no basic services. I needed power to work from home for Fairfax Media. I knew by then The Press building in town was badly damaged and had no idea where its staff would be going - so we packed the car and left the house in a mess. After driving across town and getting stuck in liquefaction - a man in 4WD kindly towed us out - we checked on my brother-in-law, who lives by himself, and then dropped my wife's workmates off at their homes. We then headed for my parents' house on the West Coast. By then it was about 7pm.

It's not easy to forget the day itself - the adrenaline that flows in a life-threatening situation heightens one's senses. The days after the quake we spent on the West Coast where I worked sub-editing earthquake stories appearing in Fairfax papers. The stories that landed in the sub-editing desks were different from "routine news" because of the

high emotion they conveyed. They were also different because of the extent to which journalists were placing themselves at the heart of many stories. As a former reporter and chief reporter, who dealt with trauma news to some extent, I started to wonder how the journalists were dealing with the personal impact of the quake on themselves and their work. This can be considered the genesis for this thesis as I considered what could be learnt from the news event and its impact on local journalists.

For example, the earthquake affected my sub-editing work in several ways. I tried, where possible, to write headlines that were as positive as possible given the circumstances. In stories dealing with the families of earthquake victims I was hypersensitive to anything that might cause further upset and checked details more closely for unwanted errors. Over time, I also found myself tiring of stories that dealt with tragedy and “doom and gloom”. Personally, I wanted the media to take on a cheerleading role; to encourage the community to recover and build for the future rather than constantly looking back toward the tragedy of February 22. In some ways this position amplified and crystallised my belief that reporters must cover stories that can help their readers/viewers - to provide not just information, but in some cases strident advocacy.

We returned to Christchurch after a week once power and water was restored to our house. My story is at the lower end of what people experienced, as will be shown by the journalists’ interviews. I did not stay in Christchurch in the days after the earthquake and had the luxury of being able to go elsewhere. However, what many people outside of the disaster zone tend to forget is the impact that ongoing aftershocks can have on the morale and outlook of a community. Christchurch experienced big aftershocks of magnitude 6+ in June and December of 2011, which prompted a slew of smaller magnitude 4-5 earthquakes. Those aftershocks, alongside many tremors of magnitude 5 or less, put people on edge because they referenced every subsequent shake to the major event and questioned whether the shaking would stop and whether

their homes could take more shaking. Every new shake can reignite the trauma of the big event. Everyone deals with that in a different way.

Personally, I have not been greatly affected by the earthquakes - probably because two weeks after the February event we found out my wife was pregnant, so I immediately had something else to focus on. However, I did drink a little more, there were concerns about our house, which we did move out of for repair more than two years after the event, and of course during the big aftershocks there was concern for keeping my pregnant wife well-rested and relaxed. By the December 2011 aftershocks our son had arrived and the sleeplessness was focused on making sure he was safe during any tremor.

I think the earthquake experience has the power to change people's attitudes and understanding of what it means to be part of a community, at least for a short time - a position that is backed by academic literature on community values and resiliency post-disaster. That research shows traumatic events can highlight the values important to a community and amplify connections between community members (Quarantelli and Dynes, 1985, Bretherton and Ride, 2011, Tierney et al, 2006). For example, we got to know our neighbours well: we did not before the quakes. We share a common bond with them and all those other people in Christchurch who lived through February 22. It is a bond that can inherently exclude those who did not experience the trauma of that day. The earthquakes and the subsequent slow recovery are key topics of discussion no matter who you talk to in Christchurch - everything in some way still goes back to that day. People who do not live in Christchurch, naturally, have tired or hearing about the earthquakes.

In many ways this research is undertaken by someone immersed in the study through his personal, working and academic life - it is a mode of sociological research that can produce interesting and worthwhile results not only for studies of news content but

qualitative scholarship in general (Gans, 1979, Tuchman, 1978, Kvale, 2007, Flick, 2007, Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). Of course, this study is more than just participant observation as it uses content analysis and inductive techniques to test various strands of data. The impact of being so closely associated with this research was noted in the methodology chapter and it needs to be openly acknowledged so the reader is aware of the author's relationship to the topic.

As described in the methodology, the following case stories were selected for an in-depth discussion of how journalists working across different media were affected by the February 22 earthquake. The aim was to bring into focus their personal and professional experiences in a format not dissimilar to the reportage journalists use in their work. Each case story starts with the experiences of journalists on February 22 and then follows a narrative sequence that considers the impact of that event on their work in the disaster phases post-quake - immediate aftermath, recovery and return to some kind of normality (Stock, 2007).

In terms of their journalism, the interviewees would likely express their news selection. In accordance with Graber's (1997) stages of media coverage of a crisis, during the first stage journalists are the primary source of information for the public and officials and they help to describe what has happened and focus the relief effort. In the second stage journalists will try to make sense out of the situation and address the needs of victims. The third stage overlaps with the other two as the media tries to place the event in a long-term perspective.

It was found in the preparatory stages for the interviews that journalists predominantly wanted to talk about the day itself before considering its impact on their later work. While the case stories share similarities they also represent the different responses of individuals to a traumatic event. The theory of collective trauma provides a flexible framework for explaining how individual responses to an event can come together to

form a communal response. For example, the first case story is focused on Olivia Carville, who began her first journalism job at *The Press* newspaper just months before, and her very personal connection to the event. The second discusses photographer Iain McGregor and his difficulty balancing his professional duty as a photographer with the need to find ways to cope with what had happened. In the third case story Amanda South provides insight into the importance of working for her community as motivation for her disaster reporting and the personal toll of the disaster on her. In the fourth, Jeff Hampton offers a senior journalist's perspective on the disaster and the media's battle with officials for information. The fifth case story is different because it is of a print journalist who declined to be named. "Journalist A", who had next to no previous experience of covering deadly or traumatic events, highlights the unusual professional and personal challenges he felt the earthquake posed. In the final case story former Press editor Andrew Holden discusses the news coverage from the perspective of a senior newsroom manager. This group was chosen because they are representative of the 33 journalists who took part in this study. As a group they represent nearly 20 per cent of those who took part and provide a strong platform from which to discuss the key points of this study. At second mention each person will be referred to by their last name - a journalistic convention used by many New Zealand newspapers.

Olivia Carville

Carville was on her work phone when the shaking started and pieces of ceiling started to fall down on her desk. She crawled under her desk and could see dust and hear sirens, alarms and people around her screaming. "I remember one of the reporters sitting next to me just yelling out 'we're going down, the building is going down'. And that really hit home. I guess I really started freaking out then."

When the tremor stopped she remembers seeing the top of the building had collapsed

and some of her workmates were injured. The surreal nature of the event, mentioned by many of the interviewees in terms of there being “too much stimulus”, that what were seeing was “hard to believe” and like “something from a movie”, raises questions about how reporters can manage to do their jobs when they are caught in the middle of events.

All *The Press* reporters were told not to leave the building until the exits were checked, despite ongoing tremors. Carville used her phone’s camera to take film of what was happening. After a few minutes they could evacuate the building, jumping over rubble as they went down three flights of stairs.

“And then we got out and pretty much everyone who worked in the building was standing 100 metres back from it looking up and thinking ‘holy shit how did we get out of there with our lives’. The whole thing had kind of fallen forward. I remember just standing not knowing whether to laugh because I was alive or cry.” Carville then met *Press* videographer Dan Tobin, who had been on a city street when the earthquake hit. He had seen buildings collapse on people and rushed a couple of city blocks back to work to check on his friends and get his equipment. Carville joined Tobin and they made their way to Cashel Mall, where he had been previously. On the way Carville did an emotional piece to camera, which was later filed online. At the time, Carville says she was upset and struggled to get her words out. It was one of the first examples of a reporter placing themselves at the heart of the story and trying to convey the trauma of the event.

“We kept walking and Dan kept videoing but at times I couldn’t stop crying, so he was really decent then and pulled the video down - it was tough. For me at that stage it wasn’t necessarily the buildings but it was the people,” Carville says. “I saw grown police officers crying and then I was like ‘holy shit if that grown man is over there crying and he is a cop what the hell am I doing’. And then you saw people covered in

blood. I saw an elderly man on one of those walkers and he was just frozen and he had tears streaming down his face and he didn't know where to go. And you were like 'do you go and help him or do you do what you are meant to do?' I felt pulled between going out there and doing your job and documenting it for the rest of the world really or being a human.' The tension between "being human" and carrying out the role of "detached journalist" reporting the earthquake stands out in Carville's comments. She is acknowledging, at this early stage, that it was very hard to put aside her personal trauma while carrying out her job to document what happened.

In Cashel Mall she saw people getting lifted out of the rubble by rescuers. The rescuers were mostly members of the public as emergency services were stretched to breaking point. She saw her first body in Cashel Mall - a person's legs sticking out from under concrete. "You didn't know whether to approach them and sit by them and get a blanket or to move on because maybe you could help someone who was alive or to keep documenting it. You were really torn about what you were doing." As she continued down Cashel Mall, Carville saw a woman in a green dress with terrible facial injuries. Carville did not recognise the woman, but the woman called to her by name. "And then I registered who it was - Jane Taylor - the mother of a really close friend of mine, Alex Taylor, who died in a car crash in 2008 ... I knew she was touch and go because of the extent of her injuries. She just said 'sit behind me and hold me together because I can't breathe'. So I sat behind her ... I remember trying to hold her ribs and as she was breathing I could hear the blood coming into her lungs." Tobin tried to film the pair but Carville asked him to stop. The close relationship between Christchurch journalists and victims is worth noting at this point. All the journalists interviewed for this study mention the closeness they felt to their audience, primarily because of the shared experience. They believe they understood the trauma people are going through. Carville's helping her friend is an extreme example of how local

journalists could not possibly detach themselves from the event and raises questions about, even as the dramatic event has given way to more normal practice, whether the earthquake has changed the journalism culture to an extent where reporters choose not to be detached from what they are reporting.

Carville's experiences in Cashel Mall that day would form part of a first-person news account, which was published in *The Press* newspaper. That story included a picture of her holding Taylor - showing journalists are as much a part of the story as anyone in Christchurch. As Carville held Taylor, a seriously injured man was pulled from a nearby bakery and placed next to them. Shane Tomlin, who later died, was photographed by *Press* photographer Iain McGregor getting help from rescuers. That photo, of his face, blackened from falling debris, was one of the more startling images taken on February 22nd. McGregor's experience will be discussed later.

Carville asked another *Press* photographer, John Kirk-Anderson, who had made his way into the mall, to assess Taylor's condition as Kirk-Anderson is trained in first aid. He decided her injuries were bad, but she would live. At that point, Taylor's husband arrived quickly followed by a policewoman who took her to hospital. Taylor had massive internal injuries and arrived at hospital just in time for doctors to save her life. Some weeks later, *The Press* published a story and photo of Carville visiting a recovering Taylor in her hospital ward. Again, the reporter became part of the story. Carville and Taylor shared a collective trauma that broke down any notion of journalistic detachment. The situation also highlights something that many local journalists faced - Christchurch is a small city and they could easily be writing about stories that included their family, friends or neighbours. However, Carville says she still adhered to the strictures of journalistic practice in that it was important to get people in stories rather than rely on her own reporter's impressions. At the time, she says, she felt uncomfortable about being "part of the story". "I think it's important because it doesn't seem credible coming just from the journalist anecdotally. If you get

it coming from the voice of someone sitting there experiencing it then it is a lot stronger.” It appears, then, that journalists do find that some reporting practice changes, but the event is not totally disruptive.

Conversely, and importantly, the earthquake did affect her reporting practice. “I also feel it has changed how I deal with people. I think I have an understanding of how a lot of people feel about the media and I feel like I’m in a position now where I can listen to their concerns, counter them and try and get them to talk to me.” That ability to view how people see the media comes from a new sense of empathy with those she reported on.

Carville spent much of the rest of that afternoon of February 22 walking around the central city with her colleagues. At one point she encountered a man watching rescuers work through the rubble. He was waiting to see if his brother would be pulled out alive or dead. “You don’t know whether to ask ‘can I get a comment from you’ or to just leave him. I was like ‘can I take your name’ and he said no so I decided not to push it.” Carville’s comment is indicative of a recurring theme in the interviews - reporters felt sympathy and empathy for the families of victims to a greater extent than they might normally - for example, if covering a murder or accident. In dealing with the victims’ families local reporters took immense care not to upset them further to the point of, in some cases, showing them stories for vetting before publication.

Carville has given thought to the traditional journalistic notion of objectivity, but has found her newsgathering was helped by acknowledging her earthquake experience in relation to what others went through. “I try to be objective with people that I dealt with. But in some cases I felt it may make them more comfortable to let them know that I’m a person, that I nearly lost my life in *The Press* building, that I’m not proud of some of the things I did on the day of the earthquake or some of the things I did after it, but I am trying and letting them know that I’m a person trying my best.” Carville

says the bond between her and the public, especially families of victims, grew stronger over time: “I felt an odd connection to the families and I really wanted to put myself out there and wanted to speak to them. I don’t know if that is because I was out there on the day and I saw the bodies. I don’t know, maybe if I felt I could maybe speak to them or communicate with them on a different level because I lost my dad in September 2010 just before I started at *The Press*, so I knew what it felt like. We had a story in the paper after he died so I could relate. I felt that I knew in some small way what they were going through and that helped me connect with people.” The extent to which Carville relates the earthquake to events in her personal life shows that she is no longer the journalist standing outside looking in. Carville, like many of the other reporters in this study, can be described as using her work, and stories, as a means of understanding and coping with the event.

Although Carville attended some counselling sessions to discuss her experiences, she says that she has tried to put that day to the back of her mind. Nonetheless, when the large December 23, 2011, aftershocks hit Christchurch and she was on holiday overseas Carville felt she should be back at work. “I did feel like shit over New Year when we had that massive quake here on December 23rd and I was in New York at the time. I was watching the media updates and I couldn’t handle it. I wanted to get on a plane and be here, I didn’t cope with that very well. It didn’t feel right and I was texting people in the newsroom to see what was happening.” The comment indicates a couple of important issues. First, Carville felt she needed to help workmates - her professional collective. Secondly, the underlying inference is, she did not know how to respond when removed from the Christchurch community, which was going through yet another earthquake-related trauma. The incident could be viewed as an example of Carville feeling “guilt” at not being there for her colleagues and community. In some ways it could be viewed as a kind of “survivor’s guilt” motivated by her own personal experience and a wish to be part of the community’s experience.

Returning to February 22, Carville eventually got a ride out of the city with some colleagues to *The Press*' temporary home at its printing works on the outskirts of Christchurch. She was told to write "what she saw". "You're never told that as a journalist, to write what you saw, you're told to get someone credible, to get a voice," she says. "They put a laptop down and I remember sitting there and thinking 'how do I go about explaining this?' And I looked down and my dress was ripped and covered in Jane's blood or someone else's blood. It was covered in dirt. I had bits of building still in my hair." Carville was told to take time off the next day to recuperate. She received calls from media outlets all over the world because of her profile online and in the newspaper. "I think I wanted people to know that *The Press* is the local Christchurch newspaper and we did everything we possibly could to cover that story and get papers out. I hadn't been at *The Press* for a long time but I did feel a loyalty to the newspaper and I wanted to tell them what we'd been through, what our colleagues had been through and the fact we got the paper out the next day." This comment shows the journalist's experience of trauma, and their reflexive knowledge of it, was central to the initial coverage of the quake. What "they'd been through" helped to frame the event. Carville says she felt uncomfortable being part of the quake story. However, as noted above, it did help her form relationships with the families of quake victims because they knew she had been through a similar traumatic experience.

In the days and weeks following, Carville found she had to take care with comments provided from the public because "they gave raw interviews and didn't think a lot about what they were saying". For one story, she quoted a man saying the city was divided between the worst-affected eastern suburbs and the less-affected western suburbs where life had returned to normal. The story caused upset: "I wrote that story and I shouldn't have. It generated about 300 online comments talking about how *The Press* was dividing the city and we're all in this together and it is people like you who are dividing the city. And it wasn't fair to the guy at all. He made one passing

comment to me and that was put on the front page and I shouldn't have done it.” Carville, by being reflective about her work, acknowledges her news selection was altered after this story - she tended to avoid suggestion of a divided community in favour of a unified response to the disaster. Notions of solidarity, stemming from a collective trauma, are a common theme in many of the interviews. Local journalists do not see their disaster role as one of questioning community togetherness, but rather they reinforce notions of the collectivity working as one to deal with the disaster.

Importantly, Carville says the earthquake has changed her approach to her job and how she approaches people. She is now more likely to “listen to their concerns, counter them and try and get them to talk to me”. The interaction with official sources, while good in the immediate post-quake period, has changed. Journalists had moved into a “watchdog role ... looking at the flaws and what is going wrong and how it is affecting people”. She would rather focus on individuals and help them to sort out their problems - the role of journalist as advocate for their audience. Therefore, the “public” is not viewed in abstract terms and there is not “them” (the public) and “us” (the media) but rather those walls of thought are effectively pulled down by the traumatic nature of the event. Carville: “It was months after I started at *The Press* before I realised how powerful it is. I can change things. I heard from one quake victim who I built up a bit of relationship with that she had received a letter from the council saying how the burial plots at the cemetery they'd have to pay for them now even though they had been told they wouldn't have to. So I was like ‘that is ridiculous, let's get that in the paper’. It went on the front page and the next day I got a call from [Christchurch Mayor] Bob Parker saying, ‘look, we've retracted that we're now going to pay for them all fully’. So it is little things like that, you do one story and bang they're going to pay. You really can make a difference.”

Carville's story illustrates the way a disaster, and collective trauma, influenced her formative moments as a junior journalist, her news selection and relationship with

sources. Her news selection was framed in the context of her own disaster experience in Cashel Mall and elsewhere in the city (she was a victim too and a central actor in the response); she recognised a collective suffering and a growing responsibility to help other people (through her reporting of events and on a personal level by helping people on the day and in her later coverage); her relationship to sources changed - both in the way she carefully approached people to get their comments and in her preference for “people” over officials. She felt closer to families of the victims because of her own experience and acts akin to advocate for people dealing with quake-related problems. Carville is also highly self-aware.

Iain McGregor

McGregor is a photographer at *The Press* newspaper with 16 years’ experience at the time of writing this study. When the earthquake struck he was driving down Moorhouse Avenue on the edge of the central city. His first reaction was to head back into the central city, walking some of the way because of gridlock on the roads. He arrived at the Bridge of Remembrance at the end of Cashel Mall. Among the first people he saw being pulled from the rubble was the mortally-injured Shane Tomlin and a badly hurt woman.

“I definitely felt like a victim,” McGregor says of that day. “When I was photographing the woman getting pulled out of the rubble I thought ‘this feels strange’ because it was like I’d seen it before somewhere, like on the wires, but not in front of me. There was a 50-year-old middle-aged white woman getting pulled out of a building a bit bloodied and I was thinking ‘what is wrong with this’. She lived. And with Shane Tomlin I thought he was OK and that he was going to live. He got brought out and his face was blackened, but he looked alive. While I was taking pictures of Shane I noticed there was someone on the ground next to me who was being helped by a cop and ambulance person and he died on the street next to me. And his partner was

there also, I think. I could also see there was a foot sticking out of rubble so I could tell that person was dead, so I started to realise that it was really bad.’’ McGregor thought he should take photographs so there was a record - the notion that journalists create the first draft of history comes through strongly in the interviews - of what took place, but he did so from the perspective of someone caught in the middle of events, alert to the suffering of others, and not as a photographer divorced from proceedings because he happened to be looking through a lens.

‘‘There were patches where I wasn’t taking photos where I had my camera down and I would sort of cry a bit and then I would lift it up and shoot again ... I think everybody in Christchurch that day probably felt like a victim in some way. But I don’t think everyone would have had a similar experience to that. It was pretty evident to me pretty quickly that there was potential large loss of life. You’re always questioning what you’re doing. What am I doing? Is this appropriate? Is this actually happening, just trying to take stock. It was a pretty unique situation to be in.’’

While trying to do his job he was concerned for the safety of his parents - his mother worked in a multi-level building. The pressure of working in traumatic conditions while also trying to make contact with family members is common to interviewees. The fact they were working in their home created extra strain for journalists and made it more difficult to remove themselves from the situations they were reporting. Most of the journalists were attempting to make contact with loved ones, much like the rest of Christchurch, by using a phone system that was overloaded. Again, it highlights, in a minor way, how the collective trauma of a disaster cuts across a journalist’s private and professional life.

Like many other journalists McGregor notes there was a ‘‘human’’ urge to help pull people from the rubble, but so many others were involved that he did not think he could help. His job ‘‘was to shoot what was happening’’. However, the photos he took

of Tomlin did cause him some upset because he was sure the man would survive. “I was pretty gutted,” McGregor says. “I shot him when he was on the bench and he looked at me and he looked a bit confused and then he went back to resting on the guys who were looking after him. Then it came out a day or two later that he was missing. And then maybe three days later I was having a drink in the Brewer’s Arms and Pete Meecham [a senior Fairfax photographer] came in and had a drink and I asked if there had been any word on Shane Tomlin and he said he was dead. And I was like ‘fuck it’, you know.” The strong connection that local media feel towards people they have reported on during the earthquakes is a recurring theme. That connection is, according to study participants, stronger than during “routine news” because they shared the event with their audience in a way they have never done before. Most of the journalists in this study do not see themselves sitting apart from some abstract idea of “the public” but as part of the community.

McGregor says although it was upsetting to hear Tomlin had died, he hoped the photo comforted the dead man’s family in some way. “His family now know where he was and who he was with when he died. You know ... It’s important to get those images out to the world so you can elevate people’s understanding of what really happened ... It’s just not a story or picture, it’s people’s lives and I think when people say you’ve got a blanket when you put the camera up, you can disconnect, I don’t think I see that as a good thing because you want to connect to get that empathy and that emotion across and feel what they’re feeling, so you get across what is happening.” It could be argued at this point that McGregor is trying to make sense of what happened, and his own actions, in an effort to make order of the events and help him cope with the incident. The extent to which he might do this in a similar scenario in a location that was not his hometown is a question that is worth considering. For example, would he feel he had to justify his actions to himself if he had taken the photo at an overseas disaster?

Later in the afternoon of February 22, McGregor decided he should try to file his photos. He made his way to *The Press* printing site and uploaded the images. He did not omit any photos for reasons of taste and left decisions about what would be published to those further up the news production chain. After leaving work he visited his parents to check they were OK before trying to get his personal car out of the central city - something that took hours because of the road conditions. "My parents, I don't think knew the full extent of what happened," he says. "They were badly shaken. I was trying to show them some pictures on the back of my camera, what it was like in town, and they just didn't want to look, they were freaking out. I stayed with them for a week or two because they were constantly freaking."

The role that journalists' families play in their professional life is seldom discussed in any academic text read by this author. In the aftermath of February 22, journalists would talk over their professional and personal concerns with their loved ones. After a day of focusing on the earthquake at work, they would return home to the same subject. The lack of essential services, fear of aftershocks, damage to homes and uprooting of daily routine created a unique situation for local journalists. There was no splitting work from the collective trauma experienced by their family and friends. Such a situation, where one's family is involved in a story to some extent, is not normal for "routine news". In some instances, family and friends provided direct routes into stories. They offered information, suggested ideas and acted as sources or the subjects of stories. Under such traumatic conditions journalistic frames will likely be emotionally-driven and focus on the human aspect of the disaster - how individuals and the community are coping. The extent to which journalists' work and stories are refracted through an emotional dimension is an interesting question for consideration in this thesis. McGregor says he was uncomfortable with some of the coverage in other media when it became solely about the journalists' experiences. "Some of the coverage not that long after was pretty embarrassing when they made it about themselves. This

is like what we did and what we did in our situation, fucking hell 450,000 people live here.” In some ways, this quote is similar to Carville’s position that credibility stems from recording the experience of the community and not becoming too much a part of the story.

In the days following the earthquake, McGregor says the relationship between officials and photographers started to fray. “We missed the deconstruction, the demolition of Christchurch because of the cops, because of Cera [Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority] you know. The excuse they used was that it was too dangerous yet it was safe enough for a photographer from Wellington and a 17-year-old assistant to go and document for the archives. We should have been in there every day being the eyes for 400,000 people every day. I just didn’t understand why we couldn’t. It was just a sheer lack of understanding about what we do and what our role is in something like that.” The belief that media are “eyes” for their audience cuts across several themes, including recording the event for history, being a watchdog of official actions and advocating for the public. The cordon placed around central Christchurch and the process for gaining access was a sore point for many interviewees. Journalists believe many decisions about the demolition of the city were not subjected to enough public scrutiny. The lack of access became one of the first points of tension between media and officials, changing their relationship from one closer to mutual co-operation immediately post-quake to one of greater mistrust as time passed.

McGregor says he is proud that he could work at all given the wrenching trauma of February 22. He attended a couple of counselling sessions to talk over his experiences. “The whole thing about counselling was to get you talking but I was fine talking. I was quite open about it all. So anyone who wanted to talk about it or hear about it, I didn’t have a problem opening up about it.” One of the biggest problems post-quake was trying to release the adrenaline that had built up in a city where leisure activities were

restricted because of ruined sports facilities, grounds and beaches dirtied by damage to sewer and waste pipes. McGregor says:

I went to a couple of sessions of counselling and she asked me about my previous 12 months and I was like 'OK' so I told her about the Football World Cup in South Africa, I was in a little room for weeks going to 90,000-seat stadiums and it was all very intense with deadlines. And then I got back and there was the September earthquake. That was busy and there were a couple of weeks on the West Coast for Pike River [a mining disaster near Greymouth on the South Island's West Coast that killed 29 men], there were a couple of fairly heavy court cases in between and then there was February 22. And she was quite surprised by all that. She said 'your system is constantly getting pumped full of adrenaline. How do you get rid of that?' I said 'normally I'd snow board or surf'. She said 'well what are you doing now?' And I said 'well it's not winter so there's no snowboarding and the water is polluted so I can't surf, so I guess mainly I drink'. So I drank quite a lot. The whole thing about counselling was to get you talking but I was fine talking ... I've spent quite a bit of time out of Christchurch since the earthquakes and I've taken a few holidays. I've been away for work and that has all probably helped. I've got six weeks away over this winter. You know I'm strangely OK living in the city at the moment. I live in a multi-level brick building by the cliffs and I feel quite comfortable there.

The above quote shows the impact that a build-up of difficult, or high-stress events, can have on a journalist. Although this study does not look at the cumulative impact of covering different events on a journalist, the list of stories that McGregor cites shows that reporters must deal with stressful and traumatic situations regularly and have ways of coping.

Significantly, he says that the earthquakes had provided him with “a better perspective on what’s relative and what’s not and what’s important”. “It gives you a perspective on life and other stories. I think the paper is going well. There is not a lot of stuff we’re covering at the moment that is meaningless. Photojournalism is documenting stuff that means something to people, that’s important in people’s lives ... The intent from everyone in the newsroom and on the paper is positive and they’re doing it for the right reasons. There is no selfishness and it’s all about the city and getting the right information and keeping politicians honest and all that sort of stuff. I think the intent from everyone is right.” Many of the study respondents believe the earthquake has promoted, for want of a better phrase, “real journalism” - “meaningless” stories are not required, whatever they may be. Reporters feel they are doing important work - not the “rats and mice” coverage of routine news - to help people understand what happened and fight for the resolution of issues. The reverse of this is that other issues, which once would have been selected for coverage, are now ignored because they seem unimportant in comparison. Because of their disaster experiences journalists invest their personal and professional lives in their coverage and therefore feel a greater sense of ownership of earthquake issues. The use of news values is an inadequate way to explain this change. Local reporters cannot simply remove themselves from the nexus of journalism and trauma.

For McGregor, the close relationship with the public for the first 12 months after February 22nd was one of the most significant changes for his photojournalism. “I think, generally in New Zealand, people dealing with the media can be quite insular and suspicious. We’re a very inward looking country but after the earthquake people perceived us as having done a really good job and as having provided a really good service. When you said you were from The Press people would say ‘you guys have done brilliantly’ ... Especially in the weeks after, anyone who was here on the 22nd you’d instantly have something in common with so many people.”

However, he says that common bond faded as time marched on. “I think that [relationship with the public] is dying off now depending on what side of the fence you’re on - depending on whether you live on the east side, depending on whether or not your issues are getting enough time in the paper.” McGregor’s comments, to an extent, reflect the idea that any change in relationship between the media and their audience will mirror the cycle of the disaster - immediate aftermath and long recovery. Therefore, the influence of collective trauma on news selection and source relationships can be predicted to wane over time. That influence will not disappear entirely because coverage of anniversary events and memorials will reignite the community’s collective memory.

Reporting a disaster in one’s hometown is very different to “parachuting” in and out of other locations, McGregor says, to the extent that socialising with journalists who arrived in Christchurch seemed inappropriate. “I remember, I think a night or two after February 22 and all the national and foreign media arrived in the city to cover it, and at the end of the day everyone went to whatever bar was open to get together and have a few drinks. I went along to catch-up with a whole bunch of people I hadn’t seen for a while and I thought ‘fuck, I’ve done this before’. You know, you turn up to a place where everything is going bad and everything is fucked up but on some level it’s OK because you catch-up with mates for a drink and dinner and everyone is having a good old time. But I thought ‘no I can’t do this, I can’t be part of it’. So I pulled the pin and I just had to get out of there. When I go into other places and areas now for stories it’s not like that for me any more. I can see it from their side a lot clearer, their side being the victim.” Other respondents make similar comments to McGregor; they feel protective of Christchurch people who are part of the collective trauma and want to shield them from the actions of outside media. Those comments are a result of the bond formed with the public as a result of the earthquake. In some ways this bond is similar to that formed between British journalists and soldiers as discussed by

Morrison and Tumber in their seminal 1988 study of the Falklands War, although that was more a result of being entrenched with the soldiers. That study showed that by living in proximity with, and sharing experiences with soldiers, journalists found it difficult to detach themselves from the events they were reporting.

Conversely, many Christchurch-based reporters in this study felt antipathy towards their media colleagues who arrived from elsewhere in New Zealand and from overseas. The impact of a disaster on journalists' connections to their colleagues is not something that has been discussed at greater length in any academic literature seen by this author. What the Christchurch experience highlights is that many local journalists preferred to align themselves with their community as their primary and most important affiliation, rather than their professional connections with other reporters. The wider analysis of interview themes, which will be discussed at greater length in the results chapter, will include more discussion on this important issue.

McGregor's experience is slightly different from Carville's in that he is focused on presenting photographs of events. He does not have to convey the news in words, and order his thoughts in terms of what is most important to least, as is the case with the writing of news story, but can allow the picture to tell the story. Also, his pictures are subject to the greater whims of senior editorial management in terms of choosing which will be published. However, his comments acknowledge the collective trauma of which he is a part (his sensitivity to the actions of outside media, his upset while taking photos in Cashel Mall and concern for family and friends); the common bond formed between local media and their audience (people were more open with him); the recognition that his journalism made a difference and could help other victims of the quake (being the public's eyes, selecting news for "the right reasons" and "holding politicians" to account). McGregor's journalistic frames stem partly from his personal trauma and sharing the experience with the people he is covering.

Amanda South

South, a broadcast journalist with several years' experience, worked for Newstalk ZB on February 22. Newstalk is a national radio outlet, which was operating a Christchurch bureau out of a central city building on the day of the quake and which has since been demolished. South, like several journalists in this study, was at home when the earthquake struck. She was putting her young son down for a nap as the shaking started. "The house started to explode around us. I just took him into my body in the middle of the room and things just fell around us. We were in this little bubble in the middle and it was horrific because everyone has that internal counter and you thought 'Oh my god this is going to on too long, it's supposed to stop'. It got angrier and stuff was just erupting in the hallway. I can just remember knowing it was horrific and trying to think about my kid and I can remember my voice going 'rock, rock, bouncy, bouncy' and trying to somehow translate this horror movie as it unfolded." Journalists who are also parents faced difficult personal dilemmas stemming from their belief they should report the event, but also carry out their responsibilities at home. Leaving one's child in such circumstances is a step not taken lightly and added to the pressure journalists faced. The stress of worrying about their children's safety, alongside reporting the event, is not something journalists normally encounter in times of "routine news" and is a factor in building empathy and sympathy for others in the collective trauma. As South says: "At that point I was still being a mother, not a journalist."

South stayed at her home, comforting her son and mother, who also lives with them, before leaving the house at 4pm to report what was happening. "Long story short, I took care of my family and I took care of what was going to happen to me when I left the house, which means I packed for myself, coats, batteries, water the things that I didn't have in September's earthquake ... I basically prepared myself for war. And I didn't know what was out there. We had no power, we had no TV and the radio came

and went. So that was really strange. I knew less about what I was going to report, in some ways, than people sitting at home in Auckland.” South headed for the Civil Defence headquarters in the city, but encountered a road block preventing access. “So I had my fancy media ID and I flashed that at everybody, but they finally did stop me. And then you know how bad it is, I said to them ‘I’ve got to go to work, you’ve got to let me in, I work for a radio station, you must let me go in’. And this cop came up and said he’d take me and he put me in his car and took me all the way to Civil Defence.”

Many interviewees noted the good relationship between local reporters and official sources in the immediate aftermath. That relationship was based on previous links with sources, but also the notion that - to paraphrase - “we’re all in this together”. As mentioned earlier, that relationship would change in step with the disaster cycle. South: “Because we are local we have relationships with the Christchurch City Council communications people, they told us what they could, they were upfront as they could be.”

South says the shock of that day “unfolded for me that day like an onion peel. I did not have knowledge that other people had. I saw damage. I saw bad stuff, but I saw [Press reporter] Rebecca Todd, and she’d seen a woman’s feet sticking out from under a slab of concrete. I was totally insulated from any of that, which in retrospect I’m really glad for because I went there to do a job, get the information. [Christchurch Mayor] Bob Parker started getting the information and I’d just ring Auckland get the Blackberry online shove it under his nose every half hour or so and we’d get the information out and that was just my focus.” South’s initial focus was providing practical information that could help Christchurch residents understand what had happened and where to find public services including water and emergency help. She wanted to provide disaster survival information that could be considered not just news. In the evening, she walked into Latimer Square with two politicians and another reporter. The scene was surreal and difficult to comprehend. “One of the photographers said to me ‘look at

the Grand Chancellor' [a high-rise hotel on a bad lean]. And I could not understand it. It was all wonky, but my brain couldn't understand what was wrong with the Grand Chancellor.'" South returned home about 1am on February 23, but sat in bed and talked into the radio bulletin every hour via phone. "I just basically could not sleep and that's why I continued to work. That walk [into Latimer Square] was hard, but so necessary. How could I have ever informed my reporting if I had not gone and done that? The sirens were still booming, the water was still coming out of the road, the bridge had folded, the doors were still open at the bars - there was an incredible eeriness of it. It was too much to take in.'" The extent to which reporters can continue working, when experiencing the trauma directly, as noted earlier, is an interesting issue for discussion that will be discussed later in this thesis.

Three days after the earthquake, South says, the relationship with sources was dramatically altered by the large influx of overseas media. "I mean day one and two it was probably just Kiwis, but from day three it was Australians, day four every man and his donkey and that's when they set up massive tents for the media and a lecture theatre to deliver the information. Gosh that was different from 'hey Bob [Parker] can you talk to my newsroom'. They answered every question at those conferences, but the international media were pushing the barriers, so there was a lack of faith then growing between us and the authorities.'" International media tried to track down family members of quake victims by camping out at meetings held by officials for loved ones to explain what was happening, took car registration numbers in an attempt to track family down and generally upset many local media by their tactics. South says the local media had "a huge amount of sensitivity" for what Christchurch people were facing - the inference being they had a far better understanding of what the public faced than those reporters from elsewhere. Many of the respondents pinpoint the international media's pushing of local officials as the first step in a growing tension in their relationship with sources. To some extent this perspective is an indication that

some local journalists started to view themselves as “not the media”, but rather set apart from other outlets who had “parachuted” in to Christchurch. Instead, local journalists’ experiences pushed them towards a greater affiliation with their own community and its trauma.

In the days and weeks after the earthquake, South says, she was proud of being able to continue working in such difficult circumstances to help her fellow Cantabrians. “I got every single interview I could possibly get to help the people of Christchurch and Canterbury understand what was happening and why, especially those first few days when it was so fluid. You are always thinking on your feet, you learn so quickly what you want to know and who you want to talk to. I did a good job of getting the right people on ZB.” Helping people, as opposed to just reporting about them, indicates the effect collective trauma has on journalists’ practices. Advocacy took on a higher priority for Christchurch journalists as a result of their shared trauma with the community.

In a disaster, “news that helps” is one of the first criteria used by respondents in the study for choosing what to write about. The interviews indicate local journalists, because they also experience the disaster, believe they have an almost innate understanding of what is important and what is less so. Of course, their interactions with family, friends, neighbours, colleagues and officials feed into their understanding of what is significant - collective trauma acts like a constant feedback loop helping to frame the news. As such, news norms can change and journalists’ news selection is altered because it is refracted through the traumatic event.

About the time of the first anniversary of the February earthquake South decided to take a break from full-time journalism. “I had worked so hard last year to do what I thought was right for the people of Christchurch and help them understand and unravel what was happening and things got tough; the reporting changed at the beginning of

this year and it became about the council and criticism and negativity and I no longer felt that I was helping. I began to lose faith in what I was doing and the effectiveness of that ... I had given too much and I was empty and the negativity was everywhere.” The level of personal involvement in the story and personal desire to help others through her work stand out in South’s comment. She is part of the community and wants it to recover; she sees her reporting as a key part in that process. Without the belief that her reporting was contributing to the community in a positive way, or helping individuals to recover from the disaster, South in effect lost her news compass.

Personally, the earthquakes took a toll on South. “I gave all my energy to my child and none to myself. Physically the same as everyone, I ate too much, drank too much, didn’t do enough exercise, retrenched, although having a child is really hard it saved me because I had to get out of the house for him. I had to make play dates with friends of children the same age, so that forced me out, I had, after the June quakes I physically deteriorated. I absolutely grieved, fell apart, felt sad for everything in Christchurch. I got sick and couldn’t get well. I had three weeks off work. I started crying and couldn’t stop crying ... I’m raising a child here and I don’t know if that is the right thing. And that had a very big impact on me and it took me a long time to work through that and realise I still had a job to do. I just needed that time to be sad.”

Her comments show the extent to which the earthquake cut across the boundaries between a journalist’s private and professional spheres of life. She attended counselling and found it useful in helping her to cope. South says: “I believe in counselling and you should go if someone else’s perspective is going to help you and she did help me. She said ‘look you’re not nuts, you’re just overwhelmed and that’s OK. You are going to have to take some time off’, which I did and I just felt enormously better after that. And it is good to just have someone say ‘you saw too much, you heard too much’.”

Journalists in this study found that the shared trauma of the earthquake helped to break down notions of the hard-bitten reporter unlikely to ask for, or need, help from others.

Notably, the earthquake, South says, altered her relationship with the public because she felt a greater empathy for people. Staying detached from events was difficult. “You hear about the unjustness of it all, of certain things and there are unjust things, but you’re always going to have to go then to Cera, or the council, and try and resolve the issue and bring balance to it. When you talk about reporting after the June quakes and when that big red zone announcement came out, that particular day I was completely numb and virtually not functioning as a journalist. I was the only person at ZB covering it and I remember sitting there and hearing the Prime Minister [John Key] and [Earthquake Recovery Minister] Gerry Brownlee and Bob Parker and being told it was a good thing and knowing, that part of me completely accepts it was the Government doing a good thing, but actually feeling physically unable to process that information. I tried to do interviews afterwards and I just stopped speaking mid-sentence and it was then I knew I needed a break.” South’s own understanding of her individual trauma was viewed in light of sharing a new reality with those she was reporting on.

The connection she felt with the public was a help, not a hindrance, when talking to families of quake victims. “I’ve always found death knocks to be the vilest thing a journalist has to do, although some people actually want to talk and it is fine for them to talk, and as an experienced journalist you learn that. But I also know that I have lived through what the people’s whose doors I’m knocking on have lived through. I haven’t lived through their tragedy or their loss and I’m never going to say I know how you feel. But I was there and I saw what happened and they know that and I know that and in some way all of us in Christchurch all share a story that we went through. Of course it is easy as a journalist if you can relate, I mean look, I’ve interviewed my friend who is a red zoner so I completely cannot separate myself.” The key phrase in the above quote is “all of us in Christchurch all share a story”, because South explicitly acknowledges that journalists are part of the story they are writing about. When asked how she viewed the media’s role in society after the earthquakes, South

returns to the theme of helping others. “Obviously, we all felt really proud that we were part of that. We knew that we mattered to people who never knew we existed before that. Radio writing, in particular, you write a story and a newsreader reads that. It doesn’t say written by Amanda South. Nobody knows who you are so people got to realise that we are out there and doing things for them, but that is not what I do it for, I don’t care if people don’t know who I am. It felt really good to really make a difference. How has it influenced the news agenda and how has it influenced the stories we take? I think that being part of it, it has to be the case that it affects our decisions.” South’s journalism decisions were then, for a time, prompted by altruistic ideas about making a difference for people.

However, that position changed over time. South says: “I got to the point where people started to present me with situations and I was having to say ‘I’m sorry, we’ve heard it all before’. When you have gone to the ends of the earth and you have gone to the insurance ombudsman and you are at the end and you are still being told ‘no’ then come back to us. But then again it is how much negativity do you infuse into the news agenda? There are so many people approaching you with stories, but you just have to keep an eye on that because the people who live here, our audience, are getting saturated by some of those stories.” In many ways this statement shows that the earthquake news started to take on a “routine” news feel in the months after the event. At that point journalists had to revert to a more detached position with regard to their news selection. South had a disjuncture with her desire to help people and that helped her decision to quit.

South’s experience differs from the two journalists at the start of this chapter for several reasons. First, she was at home when the earthquake hit and did not see the dead and injured. Second, she is a mother, who first focused on ensuring her family was safe. Third, as a broadcaster, she was focused on providing information live to frequent bulletins. Despite these differences her comments show she came to similar

conclusions about the earthquake's impact on her work. She openly acknowledges the trauma caused by the event for herself and the community. Remaining detached from the people and issues she was reporting was difficult because she was part of the collective trauma and helped to frame it with her journalism. Helping Christchurch recover from the quakes was the key driver for her work. For South, advocacy became more important to her work. That position stemmed from a heightened sense of empathy for others affected by the earthquake. She is reflective about her journalistic efforts to aid others and walked away from full-time work when she felt her efforts were no longer "making a difference".

Jeff Hampton

Hampton is a journalist for national television broadcaster 3News based in its Christchurch bureau. He has more than 30 years' journalism experience. When the earthquake hit he was sitting at his desk in a central city building on Kilmore St. The building has since been demolished. "Basically, I fell backwards off my chair and ended up going under my desk and as I was going under I thought 'this is really serious, I hope the building doesn't come down'. Everything was falling off desks and there was a hell of a noise. It is actually quite hard to move in a big earthquake, but my first thought was to get under my desk." One of his first thoughts was for his son, who worked for Radio Live in the same building.

Once the shaking stopped, Hampton and his colleagues made their way out of the building and held a brief meeting in the car park before heading out to different parts of the city. "I started out with [cameraman] Warren Armstrong and we basically went about 50 metres and found a story. The Caledonian Hall had collapsed and they were hauling people out from the back of it so there were strong pictures immediately. The building had collapsed and so there was carnage. There was dust, sirens going off and shell-shocked people covered in blood being pulled from the building." While he was

standing there the road broke up with liquefaction pouring out. The sensory overload that many journalists encountered that day has left a clear impression on them and helped infuse their journalistic frames with a heightened sense of drama and emotion. However, journalists in this study did not view that sense of drama and emotion as sensationalist in nature. They did not see a need to “hype” or “sell” what was happening to readers in their stories.

Hampton stopped to talk to members of the public and describes that day, and the following weeks, as a shared experience unlike anything he’d seen before in his 30 years of reporting. “It was kind of like a shared communal experience, they didn’t mind talking to us they didn’t see us as enemies because we’d been part of it as well ... I think they also saw us as a source of information so it was good for them to open out to us because we could probably give them a bit more information than what they knew.” While trying to work Hampton made efforts to track down his wife and sons, which, like other journalists, added to pressures he faced. “It is stressful but I was luckier than most people because I got word or saw most of my family fairly early on. One of the crews I was working with was really worried about his family. He couldn’t raise them and he was stressing about that. I was worried about my house and my youngest son was my biggest concern, but you are also worried about your friends as well.”

Hampton says that while he felt the urge to help people he thought it was more important to record what was happening. “It was more important for us to capture what was going on and get it out on the news because it was obvious it was catastrophic and I thought the best thing we can do for the city is that we can get this on the news so the Government knows, the international community knows what the hell is going on. I’d covered a number of shakes and this was far worse and within 100 metres of our office you could see the scale of the damage. You could see the Cathedral was down and there was dust everywhere. It was like *Apocalypse Now*.” For many reporters, the

belief that they could assist the city through their coverage attracting outside help motivated their early quake work. They view themselves as key actors in getting their community the help it needs. Through their framing of the disaster the world could learn what was required in terms of aid. Hampton, for example, says he was intent on finding the worst damage to ensure the exact nature of the event was clear to those living outside of Christchurch.

After making his way to nearby Victoria Square, Hampton's cameraman left to find his family and he teamed with another operator, Joe Morgan. "People were shell-shocked - like they had been in the frontlines of the First World War. People were really pale and they were all hurrying to get out of the city." The pair made their way to Cashel Mall, bumping into [Christchurch] City Council chief executive Tony Maryatt and city councillor Barry Corbett on the way. They were the first senior officials Hampton had seen so he stopped to interview them, thereby highlighting the importance journalists place on getting information from authoritative sources. Of course, the situation was entirely not normal with regard to the position that Hampton and the public officials found themselves facing.

On arriving in Cashel Mall he saw people dead in the rubble. "There was a dead man lying in the middle of the mall, there was somebody sitting beside him, and Joe and I talked about it, and we thought it was a stranger just staying there because the person didn't look upset. The body was uncovered - at that stage he looked like he had been hit by a falling rock. We filmed everything." Hampton says he does not believe in censorship in the field - those decisions are made later. "We weren't showing bodies and I'd make sure people were aware we had body footage. I think you can show bodies to a certain extent, we do show bodies that are covered. I think it's quite powerful to show a symbolic image, i.e. a foot or something like that or a hand." The proximity, on a physical and personal level, of local journalists to the story also meant they were extremely sensitive to causing upset in their hometown. "I felt pretty sad

during the course of the day because you could see the city was wrecked and a lot of families were badly affected. I know people who were killed and I've been to funerals and I've seen the effect on relatives and wives etc," Hampton says. The impact of journalists' emotions on their work is mentioned by many of the interviewees. They found their personal connection with events, through relationships with those badly affected, or coming to terms with what they'd seen could influence their journalistic practices. Instead of trying to deny the emotional impact of the event on them they used that trauma to infuse their reporting.

Hampton is clear that reporting a disaster in one's hometown is more difficult than travelling elsewhere to do so because of the event's personal impact. "It's a lot harder in your hometown because for us we are still doing earthquake stories and we are doing them pretty much on a daily basis and we are dealing with people who are unhappy, so besides having to cover it early on with the full-on pressures we've had it ever since, but you also have your personal side of it as well where you're living in the town, you have to go home to a house with no water and in some cases no power. It's hard to drive around, it's hard to find food at the supermarket, you feel sad for your friends who have lost their houses. There is a sort of communal sadness as well. You can remove yourself from those other [routine] stories." Staying detached from the earthquake coverage, then, is not likely in a disaster. Instead, Christchurch journalists feel like they are part of the story, which is different from times of "routine news".

Hampton says that media who arrived in Christchurch did not face the same personal pressures. "They hadn't felt the quake. They saw the aftermath, so they didn't have that experience. They didn't have to worry about their families. I mean my own personal situation wasn't that bad, we had upset people staying with us including an 8-year-old who was pretty frightened, but generally there was a pretty good mood of let's get on and sort things. Obviously there were people in far worse situations including some of my workmates whose houses were wrecked and they had no power, no water

and no toilets. That was really bad.” Hampton’s use of “they” suggests that he did not view those media from outside of Christchurch as belonging to the same community as those who lived in the city and shared the trauma with others.

Hampton notes that the relationship with disaster officials quickly deteriorated, with journalists denied access to areas in the central city. “We had an important role and it is actually a role that we’re supposed to carry out under law ... I think they [emergency officials] need to be taught that when there is an emergency serious media should be allowed to operate in the emergency zones. We are a help to the community. I mean, imagine if no pictures had gone out around the world because the police wouldn’t let you film. I know that is hypothetical, because you will always get something out, but just imagine if that had happened. How long would it have taken for the Government to get international help?” This statement shows the importance that local journalists placed on their own perceived role in helping the community recover from the event. Also, television journalists can be viewed as “newsmakers” in their own right with the use of live crosses to explain events. In this instance, reporters can cease to be critical voices and become witnesses to events.

Many journalists in this study say they are now advocates for the community’s needs. Any perceived limitation on that role, whether by officials restricting access to areas and information, or by some other means, upsets journalists. Of the interviewees in this study photographers and television journalists - those focused on images - were particularly angered by restrictions on where they could go in the city. That anger is always placed in the context of preventing journalists from helping their community.

Hampton says that as a result of the earthquakes journalists are “more critical of the official point of view”. They are playing more of a watchdog role, holding officials to account. “I think it’s good for us because we use our own judgement more and we don’t just rely on official sources so much.” In contrast to the deteriorating

relationship with officials, Hampton says the general public viewed the media “almost as friends” - a marked change from his general journalism experiences. “We get a lot of calls and emails, particularly from people who are aggrieved about what has happened to them, but a lot of people are approaching us constantly and in the streets as well. Just one example is on Cup Day here, a lot of people came up to Hamish [Clark] and me and said ‘thanks very much for your quake coverage’. That meant a lot to me, it was very nice. I like to give them a little bit of time talking to them and I’d say ‘I hope it has helped’.” Hampton says sharing the quake experience with his audience changed his approach to news selection. “You can become quite anti certain bodies, like EQC [Earthquake Commission], because when you hear dozens of horror stories and you have your own in dealing with them and your work mates have horror stories, well it does impinge on your impartiality. You have a better understanding of people battling authorities to get a better payout. One constant theme was people not being allowed back in the red zone to recover items from their shops. We did a lot of stories about that and I don’t think that was well handled. There was a lot of pilfering going on it’s since been discovered, demolition crews were taking things. These shop owners were prepared to go into their buildings. Everyone has been affected by it down here, everybody I know has a story, you are immersed in it rather than looking through a magnifying glass or something - you are actually under the glass and part of it.”

The “immersion” of local journalists in the story is something that most interview subjects acknowledge in some form. Notably, some of the 33 interviewees are more comfortable with being part of the story, while others, including Hampton, are still trying to mediate their traditional understanding of the detached and “objective” journalist with their earthquake experience. The “immersion” of local journalists can be explained by the collective trauma they share with their audience. However, that total involvement in the story can also lead to what some journalists describe as “earthquake fatigue”. They cannot escape the story at home or work and that wears

reporters down. “I’ve noticed a lot of my colleagues are feeling tired and I think a lot of people are feeling the effects now down the track,” Hampton says. “There’s not a lot to attract young people here and it’s going to take decades to rebuild the city and that’s just tiring, and that’s the way it is though.”

Interestingly, Hampton says the earthquakes have left many journalists battling for motivation to get excited about other news stories because they no longer seem important. “From my point of view you do feel you can’t be bothered with some of the mundane things because you think how important is this, in the scheme of things, after you’ve seen death and destruction. We get a lot of releases from PR firms saying come to this launch or that launch and I tend to just file them in the round bin.” The earthquake then acted to refocus his news selection toward material that he thought was important for the public to hear - the routine no longer held much appeal.

Hampton says the interest in the earthquake from his national news desk, based in Auckland, started to wane a few months after the event. “I think they have always been caring in the way they have dealt with us, but the interest has waned and it waned probably mid-way through last year [2011] and I think a lot of people have moved on. I see our role as being a national news organisation so I don’t feel bad about it. I feel if we push a story they will listen and we can get it on. The local media are all covering it really well, so I think people are still getting the news.” This comment is illustrative of what the majority of broadcast journalists, based in Christchurch but working for national organisations, said about the priorities of their news managers. Hampton points to a key difference between those national news organisations and The Press newspaper - The Press is a local outlet that can dedicate more space and coverage to the earthquake because it directly affects its readers. Some of the broadcast journalists indicated some frustration at the lack of interest in Christchurch relatively soon after the disaster. They did so from the perspective of people caught in the event.

Hampton is the most experienced journalist covered in this chapter and he frankly articulates his thoughts on the earthquake, and its impact on his journalism. For him, the earthquake is a “communal” experience - journalists are part of the affected community and their work practices are affected by a trauma experience shared with family, friends and the wider community. So also are their relationships with the public and officials - their focus is on helping people because journalists are immersed in the event too. As such, any restriction on that advocacy role has the power to alter interactions with officials and create an environment where journalists question the disaster response effort to a greater extent.

Significantly, Hampton notes that other news stories now seem unworthy of coverage in comparison to the earthquake. On some level that lack of interest will stem from the journalists’ lack of personal involvement in the other stories. Because of the collective experience of the quake many feel they are part of something more important for them professionally and personally, and their audience.

Journalist A

Journalist A is interesting because they are one of only two in this study who decided not to be named. Nearly all the other journalists made comment that they should be identified because they expected that of their sources for news stories. However, for Journalist A the personal impact of the earthquake was something to which they had given a lot of thought and they felt more comfortable discussing that without being named. The wish to remain anonymous reflects the level of personal trauma that the earthquake caused Journalist A. It also shows the extent to which they are reflexive about what happened to them. This position also reflected their belief that the media could often over-step into people’s personal lives without good reason.

Journalist A says that Tuesday was a “pretty ordinary day ... it seems like a completely different world now. I was trying to find case studies for something. You know the

ordinary mundane battle of a newsroom.” Their response to the earthquake was to jump under a desk. “It was immediately obvious to me because there was a big boom noise and it was obvious it was going to be massive. So I ran across the office from where I was standing to my desk a few metres away and sort of slid under there before it really started to shake. I was under my desk pretty quick and it really started to rock, man it was violent. It was like being thrown a metre one way and then a metre another - it was incredibly fierce. I had to hold on to one of those covers over the plugs and it was such a struggle to hold onto it that it cut my hand on the edge of it. It was absolutely terrifying. I remember just looking at the carpet and clearly thinking I was going to die. It was like ‘OK this is it’.” Journalist A saw other colleagues get engulfed in rubble and dust. “In the immediate aftermath you climbed out from under your desk and I was in a complete state of shock. I don’t remember five minutes of it very well. I remember Richie saying to stay in the building and thinking that was mad. I understand now, because there were aftershocks that brought more of the facade down. I was wondering what to do and trying to get hold of my fiancé on the phone and the cellphones were down. I was in a complete state of shock. It was the most violent thing that has ever happened to me. A colleague, who was pregnant at the time, came up to me and said: ‘look I’m really scared can you help me get out of the building’, and that thinking about someone else snapped me out of it. And from that point I can remember stuff.” The disorientating violence of the earthquake is noted by most of the journalists in this study. The first thought of many participants was not news, but trying to find out whether their loved ones were OK and to help their colleagues. After helping some colleagues get out of the damaged building and contacting their partner Journalist A eventually joined another journalist to wander around the central city.

We went across Cathedral Square and down High Street. We stopped and talked to some people outside Coffee Culture on High Street and there was

a dead body on the street there that had a jumper on its face. These two people had obviously tried to revive them and had recently stopped. They were getting the body onto the back of a flat bed ute. There was already someone on the back of that truck who was dead as well. It was hard to know what to do. To be perfectly honest I didn't know what to do. I don't think anything professionally has ever prepared me for something that huge. I'd never seen a dead body before and I'm not really a crime reporter ... It was a very difficult ethical decision at that point. Do you talk to the person who is about to lift that dead body into the back of a ute or do you just stand quietly and observe and write it all down? In that situation I decided it was better to quietly observe it. I just noted how many dead people I saw, what position they were in, clothes they wore, did people put them on the ute, and the buildings that were collapsed around them. We then walked further down and I think we were the first reporters to get to that scene - that is probably my most vivid memories of the city that day, the junction of Lichfield, Manchester and High streets where the Reuben Blades building had completely collapsed. There were lots of construction workers trying to get people out from under the rubble. There was someone, and personally I don't know if they were dead, but they were bleeding massively from the head and they were being put in the back of a builder's van and being taken away. There was a body on the street and they were trying to get more people out. The BNZ Bank building had collapsed and the dome from that was sitting upside down like a coffee cup.

Journalist A's comments highlight significant ethical challenges that the day of the earthquake posed. In such circumstances every individual journalist must decide the appropriate action to take because there are no senior members of staff to consult. The

ethical decisions journalists made on that day range from “we must get everything possible” to “I was not interested in bothering people” and reflect that there is no uniform position in such an event.

Journalist A says that from a “cold journalistic assessment” people that day were not “particularly reliable to speak to” because they were in shock and running on adrenaline. “I think it was more important to be there in the city and write down what was happening. I’ve still got those notes. I was just writing down as much detail as possible. I mean people you did talk to, what could they really say?”. “Cold journalistic assessment” is an interesting phrase as it indicates that the reporter thinks it is the role of the journalist to remain detached and sit above what they are writing about - something they found difficult on February 22 and the following weeks because of their personal connection to the disaster.

Journalist A says nothing could have prepared them for the experience of that day, not prior reporting experience or any of their training. “I’ve talked about it quite a lot since because it was a traumatic day and I figure if you talk about it, it will help. I didn’t want to suppress it because it was traumatic. It was like a war zone. There was death, helicopters and smoke. It was craziness.” After joining up with some colleagues in a central city park Journalist A left to find their partner. It was a long journey home through wrecked streets and clogged traffic.

I had to walk for about three hours first. It was fucking crazy. I was on these antibiotics that give you cramps in your calves so every step was agony and I had to walk across the city for three hours. We had a safe point we were going to meet at after September but every time I went to one point she was at another. It was a fucking nightmare. I got back to my house. It had stood up but basically every single object in the house was on the floor. Every piece of furniture had been thrown over and everything

was smashed. The building was OK. We had no power and it was getting dark. There were all the aftershocks that night, it was absolutely mental.

I'm still trying to come to terms with what happened that day now.

Journalist A's vivid descriptions show how the mental images of February 22 stay with reporters a long time after the event, which reflects the trauma they experienced and inability to come to terms with a disaster that exceeded their capacity to fully process. They reflected on what they saw and their personal experience cannot be separated from the very professional challenges they faced in deciding what to report. Journalist A attended counselling in an attempt to work their way through what had happened. They were still attending counselling a year after the event. Did their personal experience affect their approach to news?

First, Journalist A says there is no doubt that the relationship with the public changed for the better in the immediate post-quake period because of a perceived shared experience between local media and the community. "In this case people have been so willing to talk. It was amazing, it's quite a different dynamic where they were pleased to see you and really keen to tell you their story and also amazed that we got the paper out the next day and all that kind of stuff. There was a tremendous amount of goodwill towards *The Press* after the quakes which was such a different dynamic. The quakes broke down some of the barriers and even with institutions too. There was a brief period for a month or so after the quakes where PR people and the `us and them` and all that kind of bullshit had gone. And if you walked up to people in suburbs and they're shovelling silt out of their houses and you rocked up and chatted with them then they were incredibly friendly and chatty and keen to talk to you, it was amazing." Journalist A obviously views the relationship with the public and sources in times of routine news as far more antagonistic - the aloof journalist dealing with people who are not pleased to hear from a reporter. That dynamic changed for a time after the earthquake. However, Journalist A says that after months of earthquake reporting the

relationship with both official sources and the public returned to a more standard interaction. “It’s [the relationship between Christchurch media and sources] a bit like America after September 11. There was sympathy for America afterwards but then America carried on doing what it does and everyone hates them again. It’s kind of like that.”

Second, Journalist A took pride in the coverage that their news outlet provided because they felt their work helped people to solve earthquake-related problems. “It’s actually been really amazing what *The Press* has done with its coverage and I’m really proud of what we have done. There is that kind of ... it’s the community thing. There is a lot happening in this city that a lot of people out of the city probably don’t care about that people in the city are incredibly interested in. The way we report it to them is really important and they read it. It sort of feels more essential somehow - that there is actually important shit happening in this city that people care about. You know what it is like on a quiet news day in Christchurch - you’re scrabbling around for a lead that probably no-one will read and you’re desperate to rack up something. In the worst case scenario that is what it is like, but here now there is stuff happening every day that is really important.” The heightened sense that journalism was more important after the earthquake stems from the viewpoint that reporters believed they could help the public through their news stories. As Journalist A says: “We are part of this community and I do think from the editor down that we do advocate for issues in the city because that is part of our role in the city now it’s a whole community in trauma and we’ve experienced it ourselves ... I think we are a lot more sensitive to families but we still have to get them and cover their stories. There is probably more empathy. Before we weren’t in the car crash but now we’re all sort of in the car crash aren’t we?” Journalist A’s last comment shows how the trauma of the earthquake helped to alter their perspective. They felt that their closer connection to the event and those involved

pushed their journalism to a position where reporting is seen as serving a useful purpose rather than being “mundane”.

Andrew Holden

Andrew Holden’s experience must be viewed through the lens of knowledge of his position as editor of *The Press* at the time and for the 18 months following until his move to *The Age* in Melbourne. His story differs from the other stories here because his responsibilities extended beyond reporting the news to considering the welfare of his entire staff, ensuring the continued operation of the paper and the stance it should take publicly on issues. Editors are the public face of a newspaper responsible for representing it at events and dealing with those in power positions including government ministers, city council leaders, police bosses and lead disaster officials. Holden’s story can provide an interesting contrast because his role includes a consideration for the well-being of his reporters, the oversight of an overall news balance in *The Press* newspaper and the fact that he is normally a step removed from the frontline practice of gathering news.

When the earthquake struck, Holden was in his office in the corner of *The Press* building talking to *Press* general manager Andrew Boyle. Boyle would later distinguish himself by helping staff trapped and injured in the floor above in *The Press* building. Holden says he “bolted” for the door when the shaking intensified, bumping into other senior colleagues in the hallway.

“I went to the hallway because it had always been the joke at *The Press* that the editor’s end of the building was the most unsafe, the least bolstered for an earthquake, and if any part of the building was going to fall down it would be that part. So, my reaction was to get away from that corner and head towards the main newsroom ... I stayed standing, looking down the corridor into the newsroom so I could see it turn white with dust. When it stopped I could see the cloud in the newsroom.”

When the shaking stopped he returned to his office to get his phone, jacket, car keys and glasses, leaving his laptop behind. He checked the offices beside him and then left *The Press* building via the main stairwell into Cathedral Square. “I remember noticing the dust. The rest of the building looking pretty good, I could see rubble on the pavement, I could see the spire was down on the cathedral and as I stepped on to the front I’m pretty sure a couple of people shouted at me to run, in other words to run through the rubble in case anymore was going to fall down.”

There was no discussion of news at that early stage - people were focused on comforting each other, Holden says. Holden says a few minutes later his partner, Dairne, and 6-month-old son, Raffi, arrived in Cathedral Square. They had been lunching nearby.

“ It was an interesting emotion because, one, it was good to see them safe and to be able to hold them and, two, it was ‘what the hell are you doing here? This is the last place I want you to be in the middle of this chaos’. I knew I was going to have to start marshalling the troops very quickly so the fact they were there became a complicating factor.” Holden’s comments show that in such circumstances, it is difficult for journalists to separate their professional need to report the event while ensuring their families are safe. Does a journalist tend to their family’s needs first or go out and report the news? It is a difficult personal and ethical decision to answer and will be answered differently by individuals. For example, a journalist without children or family in Christchurch may be more inclined to work than one who had loved ones to worry about.

Holden started talking to individual staff members, asking them if they wanted to work or go home and tend to their families. In each instance some agreed to work and he asked them to go out in pairs for safety reasons. The instructions for journalists were

simple, Holden says: “Basically, it was don’t all go to the one place. Spread yourself out across town.’”

After moving out of Cathedral Square with some colleagues and his partner, who was forced to breastfeed their son in the corner of a carpark building, Holden decided he should get his family home. “One of the tensions for me, and what the conversation I’d never had with Dairne, and what I’ve said a couple of times in forums to fellow professionals, is you need to have a conversation with your partner that in circumstances like that you are going to go in the opposite direction to where they want you to go,” Holden says. “We are an emergency service even though they may not think we are. And so she was quite frustrated with me because she was thinking ‘what are you doing, get me out of here’.”

The view that journalists are an active part of the emergency response is a common theme in the interviews. Journalists view themselves as important actors in the disaster recovery, able to convey vital information that the public would not otherwise have access to. Such a role does not encourage journalists to be detached bystanders, but invites them to get involved and make decisions about what is important and what is not. As such journalists view themselves as akin to other disaster first responders - the police, ambulance and rescue teams - and will likely try to balance their coverage, in the immediate aftermath, in a way that aids the recovery effort (Newman, Shapiro and Nelson, 2009).

Returning to February 22, Holden then went to find his car, while his colleagues and family were shepherded into Latimer Square by police. He returned and asked deputy editor Coen Lammers, also a participant in this study, to take control while he got his family home. The drive to his house at Sumner was torturously slow because of the damaged roads. Holden tried to use his cellphone to contact his staff and senior Fairfax managers about moving *The Press*’ operation to its printing press on the outskirts of

the city at Logistics Drive. At that point, mid-afternoon, he did not know if *The Press* would be able to produce a paper the next day.

“We got all the way to Sumner,” Holden says. “We went to find our dogs, who were both freaked, I think they were under the house this time. I took Dairne and the two dogs and Raffi to our neighbours who had a whole range of people out on their lawn where they were having a sit down in the open. I handed them over and got back in the car. I always knew I was going to come to Logistics. I think I’d heard from Coen at that point that they had moved out to Logistics so that was my focus.” He arrived at *The Press*’ Logistics Drive site about 4.30pm, by which point he knew a paper could be printed.

“All the day subs had gone and we weren’t going to call in the night subs because we had no machines,” Holden says. “There was nowhere for them to work. Part of it was coming out here and assessing what we had, which was one machine that logged onto the network. I’d been in contact with Ric Stevens as night editor and asked him to come in. Once we’d established that machine was operable I parked him on that. He oversaw the paper’s production.”

Holden says journalists were texting or emailing information via their phones. *The Press*’ stories were sent to sister Fairfax paper *The Dominion Post*, in Wellington, where they were laid out and sub-edited. Holden says he made few news decisions that day, leaving most to Wellington-based Fairfax staff. “The one news decision I did make was the front page photo and the words.” He chose the headline “Our worst day” because he wanted to make it clear that while things were tough, the community would recover. For the front page photo Holden wanted a “photo of people helping each other, survival, because it was our hometown. You pick it up the next day and I wanted a positive photo of people helping each other, saving someone. I wanted that to be the image of the day.”

Again, it is worth noting, the community role that *The Press* and other media believed they had to play. The choice of “our”, for the headline indicates a shared experience with the community; there were few barriers between what journalists experienced in the disaster and what they were reporting on. The use of a “positive” photo of people doing the “right thing” in helping others reinforces notions of a community “in this together”. From this perspective the newspaper was already positioning itself as a key actor in post-earthquake Christchurch. The paper was also suggesting to people how they should respond to the collective trauma they faced by helping others, being positive and pulling together.

In the days immediately following, Holden says the key news driver for the newspaper was to provide useful information for people. “That paper the first day proved how important it is because without power you had no TV news and a large portion of the city had no power, they had no idea of the extent of the damage. The paper the next day was the first time they’d been able to see what had happened to their city.” Therefore, in some cases the traditional notion of news gave way to the belief that providing information, not subject to the same standard of news processing, was key to helping people. Holden says an editor’s role in a disaster is interesting. “In circumstances like this [the role] is actually very little in the newsroom. I spent very little time in the newsroom. Most of your time is actually spent with the other senior managers and the rest of the country wanting to know what is going on and what do you need.” He says Fairfax poured extra staff from its other outlets around the country to help the coverage.

One of the most important decisions in the first week was to produce an “emergency-style” newspaper, Holden says. “There were a couple of key calls, that it would be an emergency-style newspaper only, 20 news pages, one section strip everything out, no features, it was partly because we didn’t have the resources to do the other things, but in fact we continued that into the second week. And it was a deliberate strategy to say

‘nothing is more important than this’ and we will focus on that. I think on the Saturday we had a few pages of world and some puzzles just to give some light relief. Page two was immediately devoted to information for readers, where to get water, where to get food that kind of thing. That was a critical part and that is why we put it so far up in the paper.” Again, at times information became more significant than traditional notions of what makes up news. The use of an “emergency-style” paper indicates the conscious priority that *The Press*’ senior team placed on being a key aid to the community. The media’s role was to help members of the public to make the right decisions regarding their own welfare and how best to cope with the disaster. Holden says the relationship with the community changed. “I think it [the relationship] has been hugely strengthened, enormously so. That simple act of getting a paper out the first day drove that.”

However, that renewed relationship with the public did not prevent the paper from representing the grief that people felt in stark ways. For example, the photo of a family grieving for their mother, presumed dead in the CTV building. “Probably the most controversial front page was the photo of the Manning family which was seen as a pretty strong intrusion on their grief,” Holden says. “It was the truth, it was the truth of what families were dealing with at CTV ... It is a difficult choice to make, but I was partly reassured because [journalist] Shane Cowlshaw had spoken to the family on the day. If we’d had no contact with the family at all I probably wouldn’t have done it but we knew who they were and how they were affected.” By defending the publication of the photo with the phrase “it was the truth”, Holden shows he has rationalised the decision in light of what he considered was the experience of many families after the earthquake. The “truth” is, however, a slippery concept with regard to news reporting. Critics could suggest that the use of “truth” as a defence does not limit the possible damage publication of the photo could have on an already traumatised family. Nonetheless, Holden’s comments show that key staff on his newspaper, at least,

thought it important to show the human face of the grief the community felt after the earthquake. By choosing to run the photo of the Manning family, *The Press* is helping to frame how the community responds to grief and trauma. As such, the paper is acting as a “carrier” of the collective trauma, both reflecting and shaping the community’s response. *The Press* decided to prioritise the expression of collective grief over that of the Manning family.

Holden says the earthquake made him reconsider how journalists approached people affected by a traumatic experience. “I think individuals are better at it now, but as a newsroom I don’t think [so] across the board. One of the questions for us is whether we talk it through. I had a phone call not long ago from the widow of the chap who died in his car as he was backing out of the garage ... The coroner’s report came out and we approached the widow and she very bravely rang me to give some feedback. And we did two things wrong. One, we rang on Valentine’s Day and didn’t know it was Valentine’s Day and it was her first one without him. Two, the reporter had expressed no sympathy or regret at all, probably because the reporter felt embarrassed about it ... So we’re not there yet in knowing how to deal with it across the board.” The comment shows that journalists do reflect on their actions and how they affect others - the February 22 disaster helped to refocus their thoughts about some of their ethical practice.

Perhaps the greatest change for *The Press* was the newspaper’s new-found confidence in taking on issues, Holden says. “I think we’re a little less shy about what we do because of our response in February. We don’t have to apologise for being journalists or doing the job that we do and that was a growing hesitation. I think we’ve learnt the power of the anecdotal. I think we’re always worried as journalists that if one person rings up and complains about something are they just a whinger? Is there really nothing in this story and if I give them the space am I giving too much to a negative argument when the overall story is positive. But I think what we found here,

particularly in examples of insurance and the way the eastern suburbs are being treated, the whole range of things and now the housing crisis, is that a true individual's experience actually hides a broader truth. And we shouldn't be afraid to highlight that because from that will come more experiences and stories.''

Holden's comments show, in the willingness to accept, and publish, the accounts of individuals' problems, a change in the relationship between his newspaper, reporters and the public for whom they write. It is an acknowledgement that to advocate for people is an important task post-earthquake. Holden also indicates that journalists felt to think of their role as key to helping the community recovery. Therefore, journalists shouldn't have to apologise for what they do because their work can help people. Holden says that by focusing on individuals, the paper can highlight important issues: "What it does is it demonstrates to the broader community that there are problems, that there are people struggling, that they may be in the same boat and they are not alone, or to the rest of the community - you may think things are settling down a bit, but there are still a group of people that are really struggling here.'" The focus on "community" and the newspaper's role in telling people where others are struggling is not something that is unique to a disaster environment. For example, public journalism efforts by media often use specific issues to campaign or push for change. However, what the Christchurch earthquake has done is amplify, for local journalists, their perception that they not only reflect what "their community" is experiencing, but can lead efforts to solve issues for them through journalists' news selection and use of sources. One explanation for such an approach, is that journalists were part of a collective trauma, which prompted a closer understanding of what fellow citizens experienced. The walls of journalistic detachment are broken down. Journalists are not only more willing to hear people out, because they understand what they are going through, but the public, according to many interviewees, are more likely to trust the media with their stories.

This aspect will be discussed further during analysis of key themes from the interviews.

For Holden, separating one's personal experiences from news coverage is an interesting issue to consider as a newsroom leader. What he does is likely to set the tone for those reporters and photographer whom he leads. "I probably get angrier and outraged more than I did in the past because I can empathise with what people are dealing with," Holden says. "If you ever want to know about red zone problems I can just talk to some colleagues. What it does for you is, it gives you the strength [to persist] when the minister or the head of Cera is saying to you 'you're just emphasising the negative here'." The relationship with officialdom, from his perspective as an editor, had been challenging since the earthquakes because of the different priorities that the newspaper and bureaucracy often had. Relatively early on, *The Press* started to "push the boundaries" of getting into areas that disaster officials had closed off because of the desire to show the public what was happening. Holden says there was a feeling that, in some circumstances, the media were prevented from performing one of their key tasks - shining a light on what was happening and why. The relationship with officialdom became increasingly strained. "It goes back to the question around community involvement," Holden says. "We're for the 230,000-odd people who read us every day and very few of those people are in positions of authority."

A majority of the interviewees in this project have expressed some consternation at the barriers local media faced in getting access to areas or information they believed was vital to the public's understanding of what was happening. To some extent, that anger is driven by journalists being close to the story and wanting to know what is happening in their own city. It also reflects the interactions journalists have with their own family, friends and sources about the need for more details about certain places and issues. Therefore, it is more than just a professional frustration.

For Holden, the earthquake created personal and professional pressures regarding the need to work versus the urge to look after his family. That added to the all-encompassing nature of the news event. His health was strictly monitored and he tried to ensure he took breaks away from work to remain fresh. However, some of his staff did find “quake fatigue” an issue. “I do keep looking for it [quake fatigue] and I’m worried about it. We’ve had three staff leave for precisely that reason. I can only trust the newsroom leaders to let me know if someone is wobbling and they need help. Part of it is you can’t smother them, they’re humans they’ve got to deal with it themselves to a certain extent. Maybe what has helped me cope is I’m just older, you know, I’m 51 and I’ve been an editor for three years before the quakes. There is a level of perspective in both age and experience. I’d have hated to have been in this position at 40 in the first year of my editorship. I know what I would have been like, it would have overwhelmed me.”

Andrew Holden’s story differs from the others in this chapter primarily because of his senior role in leading *The Press* newspaper. He was not so concerned with the nuts and bolts of gathering news as those previously discussed, but instead focused on the bigger picture. From day one Holden set the tone for the newspaper that focused on “our” response to the disaster. The collective trauma, of which his newspaper and staff were a part, created an atmosphere where journalistic detachment was no longer feasible. Rather, the media’s role, as an active participant is to help define issues, reflect the community’s experiences and advocate for change where necessary. Holden’s comments show that, no matter the level of seniority, all Christchurch journalists faced difficult questions about how they reacted personally and professionally to the event.

Summary

The case stories in this chapter represent nearly one-fifth of the interviews used for this research, but they help to illustrate the kind of situations journalists faced on February 22 and the subsequent impact on their journalism. The focus of their reporting became more personal as Christchurch journalists dealt with their own responses to the disaster. All the journalists above acknowledge, to some degree, that they are immersed in the earthquake story on a personal and emotional level to a greater extent than other stories they might cover in times of routine news. Their narratives are deeply personal because of the collective trauma of which they are a part and the participatory role they played as key actors in the disaster response effort helped to inform their journalism and provide a cultural narrative for the community's response.

The case studies showed that reporters clearly spent time in deep reflection about February 22 and what the event meant to them personally and professionally, which belies traditional notions of reporters being aloof from what they are covering. As a result of the collective trauma they experienced their relationship with sources and their community is altered. They are more questioning of officials and have a greater understanding and empathy for what their audience is going through. As such, their narratives show their journalistic frames are motivated by a desire to help residents, and themselves, understand the event. In some ways, it can be inferred that the journalists are actually using their stories as a means to help themselves cope with the disaster. Joseph (2010) has noted this mode of journalism fits well with the challenges that a disaster poses, allowing for more honest journalism than can be achieved by adhering to notions of journalistic detachment. Clearly, the journalists in this chapter believed their journalism took on a greater meaning to them and their audience after the earthquake. They also felt their attachment to the audience aided their journalism.

To an extent, any change in relationship between the media and their audience will reflect the cycle of the disaster - immediate aftermath and long recovery. Therefore, the influence of collective trauma on news selection and source relationships will wane over time. That influence will not disappear entirely, because coverage of anniversary events and memorials will reignite the community's collective memory. The interviews show journalists worked hard to rationalise what happened and could see that the event had distinct cycles that affected their work practice.

Each journalist's interview shows their news selection was framed in the context of their own disaster experience (they are victims too and central actors in the response), their recognition of a collective suffering and their responsibility to help other people and their acknowledgement that their orientation or relationship to the community and sources has changed - journalists see themselves as closer to their audience and more representative of their needs.

Interview results

This section presents the results from the qualitative thematic analysis of interviews with Christchurch-based journalists. The chapter, which includes an in-depth discussion of the prevalent and noteworthy themes across all of the 33 interviews, will show that reporters found themselves in a situation post-quake that changed how they viewed their relationship with sources and the community and stretched their understanding of how journalism could help people. This chapter builds on the analysis of individual experiences outlined in the case studies to provide a broader picture of what changed for Christchurch reporters post-disaster with regard to their work practices.

The interview data illustrates that the journalistic culture in Christchurch changed after the February earthquake. Specifically, the analysis shows journalist felt much more part of the story they were reporting than in a time of routine news. They did not see themselves as detached bystanders or part of an aloof news production process, but instead integral to helping people understand the disaster itself and how they should respond. From this perspective, their journalism was not merely about providing information for people to passively consume but it was a useful tool to help the community recover. Most of the participants in this study, the results show, had a renewed sense of purpose with regard to how their own reporting could make sense of a unique situation and provide people with information they absolutely needed to know.

The chapter will show that Christchurch journalists talked openly about how their earthquake experience influenced them personally and professionally. All the participants discussed their experiences in a self-reflexive manner - the earthquake had an impact on them personally and professionally and the interview results,

significantly, show the degree to which they reconsidered their work in light of the disaster. Therefore, the major themes that emerged from the interviews highlight the significant connection journalists felt to the event itself and to those who experienced alongside them, thereby weakening the traditional barrier of journalistic detachment.

The interview results draw attention to the journalists' belief that they are a central part of the earthquake story, which forced them to reappraise their professional role with regard to advocating for their audience and experiencing a closer connection with them. The description of major themes and sub-categories will illustrate that journalists sit at the centre of a collective trauma feedback loop that has the power to influence them and their news selection and source use.

Importantly, the interview material demonstrates journalists are aware that their role changes with the different phases of the disaster recovery, thereby influencing their approach to source use, and the focus of their news selection. For example, journalists' relationship with sources, they believe, can change as the disaster passes through its different stages from the event to slow recovery. This will be shown by a shift from a position that "everyone is a hero" in the immediate disaster environment to one where officials are viewed with greater suspicion.

An analysis of the themes from the interviews is followed by the consideration of data from the content analysis of *The Press* newspaper in the next chapter. The reporting of results allows any similarities or differences between the three strands of this research - the case stories, interview data and newspaper analysis - to be discussed. The author has tried to keep the reporting of results as simple as possible so they have greater meaning for a wider journalistic audience. Given the inductive nature of much of this research the author has been careful to ensure results are valid. The recoding of newspaper articles by this author and another coder (see Table 1 and Table 2 in methodology) help to ensure the validity of the results. The researcher identified key

quotes from the interview material and then, using the process outlined in the methodology, identified a series of 18 categories that were then condensed into overarching themes (King and Horrocks 2010). The researcher revisited the material several times to help ensure consistency and validity across the coding of each interview.

Interview data

The four key themes identified from the interview results are detailed in table 5 below with percentages indicating their share of the total themes recorded. Under each key theme heading are the interpretive categories from which the overarching themes are constructed. It is important to note that the themes do not necessarily encapsulate all aspects of the categories. Instead, the categories each contribute to the over-arching theme of which they are a part. This approach provided the researcher a systematic way to discuss how different factors interacted to influence journalists after the earthquake. The formation of key themes is discussed in the methodology chapter. Briefly, talk that was collected under the “reporter as advocate” theme shares the common trait of journalists wanting to help their readers/viewers/listeners with issues or suggest a solution to a problem. The common trait for the “part of story” theme is journalists’ experiences being a significant factor in their understanding of the news event. The shared factor in the “attached to audience theme” is a recognition of a closer relationship with their community and audience. The ethical theme is used as a measure to highlight situations where journalists faced difficult ethical decisions.

Each theme and category will be discussed in more detail below. The interpretive categories in table 5 are listed with a percentage indicating their share of total categories recorded.

Table 5: Interpretive coding percentages

Key theme:	Journalists as part of story (42.44%)	Reporter as advocate (33%)	Journalists attached to audience (22.5%)	Ethics (2.06%)
Interpretive categories:	part of story (18.45%)	journalism helps people/community (12.9%)	closer to audience (8.12%)	ethical dilemma (2.06%)
	experienced/coped with trauma (9.29%)	conflict with officials (6.06%)	community important (2.19%)	
	family/personal life affected (10.96%)	recovery watchdog (4.51%)	empathy for victims (5.41%)	
	quake story fatigue (3.74%)	officials helpful (3.22%)	emotion impt to coverage (1.03%)	
		recording history (2.58%)	people's experiences matter (4.25%)	
		Only quake news impt (1.93%)	outside media annoy (1.54%)	
		Positive stories are best (1.80%)		

As table 5 shows, 18 interpretive themes emerged from the interview process. These themes represent common threads and patterns regarding how local journalists view

the impact of the earthquake on their professional and personal lives. In total, the researcher recorded 775 instances of interpretive themes across the 33 interviews. At approximately 23 recorded instances of an interpretive theme per interviewee, it indicates that the questions posed provided a good mix of issues for journalists to consider and respond to.

The first part of this chapter will discuss each interpretive category in relation to the overarching theme of which it is a part. Significant quotations from interviewees will be used to detail how the themes relate to each other. The aim is to show that while the four over-arching themes, and the interpretive categories within them, are distinct groups they are also inter-connected and can influence each other and journalists' approach to news selection and their relationship with sources. In essence, all the themes in this study form part of a collective trauma feedback loop that has the power to influence journalists and their stories, bonding them to the event and the people with whom they shared it. The findings in this chapter, and the content analysis, indicate that journalists have their own interaction with the traumatic event itself, but feeding into their own understanding of what happened is the response of their sources and community to the trauma. This interaction with the community is a two-way street - information, emotions, feelings, responses to the disaster are all shared between the journalist, professionally and on a personal level, and those caught in the event. The community in this instance includes journalists' family and friends. From these interactions emerged the three key influences on their news stories - feeling they are part of the story, a greater attachment to their audience and playing a greater advocacy role through their reporting or, in some instances, by helping people no matter whether a news story resulted.

The first theme discussed will be "part of story" followed by attached to audience and then reporter as advocate and ethics.

Part of story

The first point to note from table 5 is the predominance of interpretive categories themes relating to journalists being part of the story they are reporting. Those categories account for 42.44 per cent of the total themes recorded. There will be several key points to emerge from discussion of the “part of story” theme. First, when journalists feel they are part of the story they are covering, the interviews show they enter a different mode of reporting whereby their allegiance to sources and what they value in their work is altered.

Second, journalists’ professional judgement was altered because of their personal closeness to the event. Journalists’ news decisions, the interviews data will show, gained validity not from the need to employ traditional notions of detachment, but rather from trying to understand the event from the viewpoint of their own trauma and of the wider community’s experience. Dispassionate professional judgement no longer seemed the right practice for making news decisions and they embraced a less detached approach to their reporting.

Third, Christchurch journalists are self-reflexive, trying to resolve notions of professionalism with the reality of the traumatic event they were reporting (Usher 2009). The interviews show journalists did think about the impact of their personal experiences on their reporting. Journalists felt their personal experience counted for a lot when reporting the earthquake story. Thus, the interview data shows journalists, in an event of this scale, were not simply part of a “news machine”, but personally involved to a level that alters the way they view their journalism.

Fourth, being “part of the story” emboldened Christchurch journalists to see their reporting not only as a means of helping others, but also a tool for helping them to make sense of the event and their own trauma. In essence, Christchurch journalists could not deny the authenticity of their experience in their work because the

earthquake was not merely a story they did, but something that also affected them personally. Journalists found those two spheres of their life crossed over to a greater extent than before, creating a different environment for them. Although professional norms still existed, and were not abandoned altogether, the greater interaction the event created between journalists' professional and personal lives helped to foster a sense that their journalism had changed as a result. This obviously has consequences for the story told.

Finally, for some journalists the lack of separation between the earthquake story they were reporting and their personal trauma forced them to reconsider whether journalism was still a job they could carry out in the circumstances. Quotes from the interviews help illustrate further the degree to which journalists found it difficult to separate their personal and professional lives in covering the February 22 quake and its aftermath. The analysis of the "part of story" theme starts with a quotation from TVNZ news report Joy Reid.

Reid says of the earthquake: "I've always been able to put up a wall in the past reporting crime and those things, but with the earthquake there was no way I could put up a wall because my life was part of the quake story." Being part of the story raises questions about the extent to which journalists can, or should, try to separate their own experience from their news selection. Former TV3 journalist Juanita Copeland provides a stark comment that is representative of many local journalists: "There is no other story where you live it like this and objectivity sort of went out the window and I found the best way to deal with it is to try and be completely straight up ... but it is really hard." Therefore, the idea of objectivity, or to extend the point, of remaining detached, is not seen as adequate for gathering the news after the earthquake, which indicates how the event altered what was valid and important for journalists' work. Such a change must have implications for how the story is told. The above comments also indicate the extent to which journalists have tried to reconcile the impact of the

earthquake trauma on their notions of how a reporter should carry out their work. The journalists in this study are openly reflective about what the event meant for them and their work.

Then *Press* deputy editor Coen Lammers provides an explanation of how feeling you were part of the story could affect news judgement: “As a news team it was an amazing time because we didn’t actually make too many conscious choices. As citizens of Christchurch we almost felt automatically where the story should go. Like people had had enough of this, and now we get to the funerals, and then we’d decide people had had enough of them and it was time to find stories of heroism and recovery.” Lammers’ quote confirms that the event did have implications for how the earthquake story would be told - reporters did not see the event in terms of something that happened to someone else, but something that happened to them. As such, their professional judgement was altered because of their closeness to the event and people affected. Lammers, essentially, is saying the measure of validity for news decisions was not a traditional notion of a dispassionate professional judgement, but instead choices were driven by an understanding of the experience local journalists shared with their audience.

Freelance cameraman Joe Morgan says, “I’ve had comments from people who don’t live in the city who say they are sick of the coverage and sick of hearing about earthquakes. You know, I get a little annoyed and tell them to come and live here and get a sense of your whole city centre gone. I’ll defend that. We’re not out of the fire yet. We’ve got a massive rebuild to get on with.” In this instance, Morgan is not merely a bystander to what is happening, but an active participant. His comment also indicates a clear connection with the community - the use of “we” shows that he no longer sees a barrier between himself as a journalist, the event, and the people caught up in it.

In the immediate aftermath many journalists found themselves in situations where they had to step outside the zone of detachment that is professionally expected of them. For example, then *Press* reporter Michael Wright helped carry an injured man to a helicopter as he was trying to report events. Coen Lammers says it is “almost impossible” to separate the personal from the professional in such circumstances. “People are affected, like the one reporter who had a nephew die and then Olivia [Carville] who saw her friend hanging in there by a thread. How do you write about that?”

The above quotes raise questions about whether the personal experience of the earthquake was solely responsible for a change in journalism practice or whether it helped to amplify what Cottle (2012) has described as a shift towards an increasing journalistic reflexivity and “injunction to care”. That change, Cottle says, can be linked to a cultural shift toward a more “emotional public sphere”. In such circumstances the reporters’ personal voice/experiences add validity to news reports, because they are “immersed” in the event. The personal connection to the event, then, can “enhance professionalism” not detract from it because journalists, acting in a reflexive way, take more care and consideration in their work (Cottle 2012). The interviews in this study certainly show journalists believe their connection to the trauma of the earthquake helped to inform and enhance their reporting. They viewed their own experiences - whether that was helping the injured or bearing witness to death and destruction - as a legitimate part of their reporting. Use of the personal voice in journalism is not new, but the earthquake, according to journalists, helped to boost its relevance to their work. Pannti (2010) has noted that by focusing on their emotional experiences journalists can help make sense of horrific events in their reporting - the Christchurch earthquake prompted journalists to take such an approach. As such, the journalists were feeding their own experiences into the community’s collective trauma.

CTV reporter Emily Cooper's experience illustrates the extent to which local journalists could literally become part of the earthquake story and how the resulting trauma cut across their professional and personal worlds. Cooper lost many colleagues in the collapse of her workplace building. She survived to be interviewed by other media outlets about her reaction to events. Cooper says:

"If anyone asked me for an interview I would never hesitate in doing it, but also I'd just bring it up in general conversation. I'd bring it up at dinners and stuff like that. I just had the attitude that people shouldn't feel uncomfortable talking about it with me. I wanted to talk about it and I'd get really angry with my parents when they'd try and not talk about it with me and I remember getting really angry with my mum one day and saying 'you don't care anymore'. It wasn't right for me, and I guess that's just part of grief, that people were moving on and weren't talking about it anymore."

Cooper's comment is an example of how journalists who experience personal trauma (9.29 per cent of interpretive themes) must also find ways to cope with it. Although they will not explicitly say so, it is apparent some journalists see telling the quake story - in their private life or at work - as a means of coping with their trauma. In this way, reporting the news and infusing some of their own experience can be viewed as an attempt to comprehend what happened. They then become part of the quake story and help to feed into the community's notion of collective trauma.

The quotes above raise questions about at what point do journalists no longer feel they are part of the story. That is a difficult question to answer, and will vary individually, although the content analysis of *The Press* newspaper, discussed later, will provide some indication. The categories "experiencing/coping with personal trauma" and "impact on their families" were prevalent in the interviews during discussions of both the immediate quake aftermath and the recovery phase. This illustrates that individuals,

as shown in the case stories for example, respond differently to the trauma stimulus. The ongoing aftershocks are a stimulus that journalists will deal with in varying ways.

While the effects of exposure to trauma are individual to each journalist, across the study group participants exhibited commonalities with regard to how they coped with their experiences. The tools that Christchurch journalists used to cope with their own trauma included talking about their experiences with a counsellor (up to a third of respondents tried counselling of some kind, if briefly, in some cases), colleagues, friends or family; removing themselves from the stressful situation by leaving town or quitting their jobs (three participants); removing their family from the city to alleviate concerns for their safety; drinking and eating more and exercising more. For example, former TVNZ journalist Vicki Wilkinson-Baker found she could not work in the days immediately after because it was too upsetting. Nor could she watch television coverage when the power supply was restored to her home. “I didn’t look at it, I didn’t want to watch it - it was too hard. It was catastrophic and it was our city and we were tangled up in the middle of it to varying degrees and I just don’t think I was in any way able to cope with it.” Wilkinson-Baker’s personal trauma prompted her to take a different approach to her reporting, forcing her to reconsider what type of stories she wanted to cover. Therefore, when she did return to work she focused on stories she thought were positive and could help people. Her choice of stories can be viewed as an attempt to help the audience, and herself, make sense of the event. “I did a story on the Linwood orchestra’s trip to Europe. It was in jeopardy because their funding was in trouble because of the earthquake. I did pop-up markets and things like that. They were community-oriented and lighter stories,” she says. Wilkinson-Baker left her job at One News to take up a journalism teaching position within a year partly because of the impact of the event.

Another journalist, who declined to be named, said they found talking to a counsellor, even after their media outlet had stopped paying for the sessions, helped them to cope

with the death and injury they saw on February 22, and the ongoing difficulty of seeing people's suffering in the disaster zone. Using a counsellor was not something that had struck them as necessary with regard to their news reporting before the disaster. The journalist said: "To be honest I was a mess and I was just trying to contribute to what the newspaper was doing - stories about utilities and power, which roads were out that sort of thing ... I did take counselling. I'd never had anything this traumatic happen to me before except when I was 17 and my dad died. I hadn't really dealt with that because I was 17 and didn't know what the hell I was doing, so I took up the offer of counselling and it's been amazing and incredibly useful." Long (2013:16-17) concludes that a range of factors will influence how people cope with their trauma related to their "personal contexts and history, whether they have experienced trauma before, whether they are new to their profession, or seasoned journalists, and the context of the traumatic events that they are covering". The aim of this research is not to determine if people coped well or otherwise, but to document what reporters faced and how newsroom practice collectively changed.

Local journalists also felt they were part of the quake story because of the impact of the disaster on their families and personal lives. Respondents discussed the difficulty of trying to comprehend and report such a big story while dealing with their own problems at home including upset family, damaged homes, lack of basic facilities and the ongoing rumble of aftershocks. In effect, there is no escape from the stories they must report.

The "family/personal life affected" category accounts for 10.96 per cent of those recorded. In the immediate aftermath the largest concern for journalists was for the physical safety of family. Over time this would change to concerns about stress levels and the impact on partners, children and family members long term. The need for repairs to houses and damaged parts of the city's key infrastructure naturally added to the strain for many journalists.

For example, *Press* illustrations editor Richard Cosgrove faced the multiple stresses of a wrecked home, dealing with the death of a close friend and trying to organise the newspaper's pictorial coverage of the earthquake. "I didn't get to my house until Wednesday afternoon. To do that, we had to go to my wife's work, borrow a four-wheel-drive, (then) drive through the various neighbourhoods. We actually had to drive through some of our neighbours' front yards to get there. I was still wearing the same clothes I was wearing the day before. When we got there, there was more liquefaction than we had in September, the house was on a bigger lean and there was shit everywhere. Stuff we thought had survived and we'd got away with was smashed. By then my whole perspective on things had changed because I'd got a text from a mate, Derek, that asked if I was at the PGC building and I said 'no I've left there'. And his wife was killed in the PGC building, so we were still trying to find her, so everything else was just shit you can replace."

Cosgrove's quote highlights not only the extent to which the personal lives of local media workers were affected, but also the relatively small community in Christchurch where reporters knew those hurt or killed in the quakes. Newman et al (2009) argue that reporting can become personal as journalists deal with the blurring of perspectives and professional boundaries during tragedies affecting their own community and loved ones. The Christchurch earthquake shows the impact of disasters on smaller communities in which journalists' work may intensify the experience of trauma because of the direct links reporters have with people involved. This may not be so for events in larger cities or in the case of journalists who arrive from elsewhere with no connection to the local community. Cosgrove said his experiences gave him "a more human approach" to his work, an understanding for others and a motivation to "advocate for them" (advocacy will be discussed at greater length later in this chapter). Therefore, his news selection was directly affected by his personal and collective experience of the disaster. A more humanistic approach to reporting was

favoured over dispassionate detachment. As an indication of the long-term personal challenges many local journalists faced, more than two years after the earthquakes Cosgrove was finally about to move into a new home after much frustration and effort.

TV3's Juanita Copeland also faced the struggle of trying to find somewhere new to live and hassle of dealing with bureaucracy in her personal life, which partly motivated her decision to leave journalism a few months after the quake. "The thing was, part of the reason I stepped down, was I knew we had this build coming up, my husband works in Auckland for three days a week and that job at TV3 is not the kind of job where you can duck out for an hour for a meeting or go and choose tiles in your lunch break. Insurance and stuff has been full-time dealing with that." Copeland's experience helps to highlight that the earthquake had created a unique situation that cut across her home and working life, forcing a reconsideration of whether it was possible to continue reporting. Contextually, this is obviously a different issue from being part of the story influencing a change in a journalist's reporting. In this instance, the earthquake had such an impact on the journalist's private life that it became difficult to continue working in a meaningful manner.

The responses from Christchurch journalists to the earthquake cannot be viewed as stable, but they change over time - moving through the different periods of disaster from the trauma of the event itself and into the recovery phase. At each point, journalists are part of the story they are reporting to varying degrees. For some reporters the trauma prompted delayed responses and for others the change brought on by the event prompted a more immediate reaction.

The interpretive category "quake story fatigue", which accounts for 3.74 per cent of interpretive themes, indicates the extent to which some journalists felt the sole focus on earthquake news was frustrating for them professionally and personally. *Press* journalist Georgina Stylianou found this heavy focus created problems for the news

mix: “I feel like saying we’ve done this over and over again - you know I wrote this same intro four weeks ago. I think in terms of the stories coming to me it has been a little bit different. Some weeks I look at the list and he is doing insurance and there are plenty of stories there and she is doing single mums in caravan, plenty of them apparently. I think rounds like council, health and education have taken a hit because they don’t have the priority anymore.” Those respondents who lamented their increasing lack of interest in writing “quake news” acknowledged fatigue did not become apparent immediately, but rather months afterwards. Such a position can be viewed as an accumulation of factors stemming from a mix of their personal and professional involvement in the disaster story. This shows that while journalists are reflexive about their experiences some view routine as good practice and the disruption to normal work could not be sustained by all.

All of the above comments illustrate in some form that local journalists are individually and collectively part of the earthquake story and help to show why it is such an important theme in this study. They also help to crystallise some of the points highlighted in the case stories regarding the level of attachment Christchurch journalists felt toward the earthquake news story. For Christchurch journalists the event was a professional and personal moment that influenced their career and lives. Importantly, being in such a situation and sharing experiences with those they were covering imbued journalists with a sense they were in a unique position to both understand and help people through the disaster experience. In that environment journalists may move beyond being mere “carriers” of trauma messages in their news stories - instead they can, in some way, likely move towards helping themselves and others try to understand what happened through their reporting.

TV3’s Hamish Clark neatly summarises what being a local meant for his reporting: “I can speak from a local’s perspective, I can explain what it feels like. I can explain that when I go home at night I’d sit down with my family at the table, when I finally got

home, and have dinner and we'd talk about the day. I didn't watch the news for a week. I'd get on the phone and talk to my family and friends and have conversations with them about what had happened." Being part of the story does have several implications for local journalists - they became less detached from their reporting and highlighted their closeness to the event as a valid influence on their work; they were self-reflexive about how the earthquake's impact on them personally affected their professional practices; and for some the proximity to the story in their personal and professional lives prompted them to reconsider what it meant to be a journalist. The above factors have implications for the next theme "reporter as advocate".

Reporter as advocate

The categories in the reporter as advocate theme (33%) share the common trait of journalists wanting to help their readers/viewers/listeners with issues or suggest a solution to a problem. Many of the interviewees experienced a kind of reawakening with regard to the belief that their journalism could help people and the community. To put it simplistically, the earthquake helped local reporters to see that not only was journalism "good", but it could be a driving force for helping the city deal with the disaster. In effect, the Christchurch journalism culture changed, reporters believed, to amplify the role of journalistic advocacy. According to the interview participants this advocacy evolved from the start of the disaster period. For example, Senior *Press* editor Ric Stevens says the newspaper and print journalists realised they were a key conduit for the vital information people needed to get by - from this starting point reporters developed a belief that they should advocate for people more. "Even on that very first night, on page 2, we started printing essential information. Things that we felt people were going to need to know. We realised not everybody would have power and internet etc. We realised very quickly we had a public duty to fulfil that was beyond telling news stories that people needed to know where they could get clean

water.” Stevens’ comments suggest that in some instances “news” was supplanted by “information”.

The interviews showed that journalists had a renewed sense of public duty; a want to met people’s desire for information and to help them solve issues and problems; a belief that media should help lead recovery efforts; and an emphasis on ensuring that officials made the right decisions for the community. The advocacy category, then, is formed by a bundle of factors, which highlight that journalists in this study believed they had an important intermediary and fiduciary role to help people post-disaster and perform a public good (Carey 2002). Reporters in this study described what might be considered standard modes of reporting - providing important disaster information, describing people’s experiences - as the starting point from which their advocacy journalism evolved. They viewed themselves as playing an important role to help their community in any form they could. As the recovery took hold that advocacy was aimed at helping people get answers to problems and issues.

Amanda South, in her case story, is a prime example of how journalists viewed their immediate role as one of helping people get what they need to make it through those first days and weeks. Her case story also raises the issue of whether a journalist’s personal trauma fuels a sense of vocation again to helping others - the interviews in this study would indicate that for many local journalists that was the case. Not for a long time had local reporters so keenly felt what is often stated by journalists as a key driver for their work - reporting for the public.

The heightened belief that their journalism could help individuals, and the community, likely acted as a big spur in motivating reporters to take a greater advocacy role for their audience as the earthquake recovery period moved on. Coen Lammers says there is a journalistic thrill in realising the important role that the media play in disasters. “The first few weeks and months we were very much a vital source of information. In

those first few days most people didn't have power and we were their only source of information. It was like back in the old days - we were the way of the east talking to the west and the north talking to the south. We had a page 2 panel for two or three weeks which had which bridge was open, which supermarket was open, where you could get your water. I thought that was brilliant and that was the most important piece of journalism we did. It was like being in a war zone and it was such a fantastic chaotic situation ... Our role has very much changed because we have become the voice of the people.”

But how did that realisation that their journalism could help people influence news selection and relationships with sources during the recovery period? First, it is important to note that journalists in this study believe their personal experience could influence their desire to highlight an individual's problem or issue for coverage - because they had a greater understanding of what people were going through. Lammers says: “I've had issues with EQC and insurance and you know so has everyone else and the stories that we are writing about Jim Smith being stuck in limbo and not getting his payout - I mean everyone in Christchurch relates to that but no-one in Wellington or Auckland can. They've got no idea.” For the local journalist, then, there is a sense of greater empathy for what is happening to the community driving efforts to advocate for people. Simpson and Côté (2006:102) say empathy can be viewed “as a way of thinking that enables an individual to get a better understanding of the feelings and experiences of another person”. They argue that journalists can absorb the trauma effect of a news story - even those stories and events that do not directly touch on their own personal lives. The Christchurch earthquake directly affected journalists' personal lives, thereby raising the feeling of empathy for those they were reporting on to a higher level. What does this mean for traditional notions of a journalist needing to remain detached to provide a balance and fair representation of events? This study appears to support previous research by Kay et al. (2011:449) who contended that the

role of journalists was changing. In the past reporters did not dwell on the impact of their coverage, but “pushed such thoughts aside in an effort to be tough, professional and objective. The movie image of the hard-bitten reporter is a cultural icon”. Kay et al concluded that stereotype was changing and journalists are now more reflective about their work and its impact. The experience of the Christchurch earthquake would seem to indicate that journalists did not see detachment as a feasible means of covering the event. Rather, their unique understanding and experience of the event fed their desire to help city residents.

It was apparent to many journalists that by focusing on the issues faced by one person or group they could highlight a problem that needed fixing for their wider audience, whether that be related to damaged homes, insurance issues or what was perceived as an apparent lack of urgency from officials. Joseph (2013:1) found that “when handled ethically according to the telling by the subject, both the impulse by the trauma subject to tell and the empathetic responses and re-renderings of the journalist join to form a type of advocacy journalism - in the public interest”.

Press reporter Marc Greenhill says that advocacy role developed from the day after the first quake. “It went in stages. [At the start it was] probably stories that helped people find out information in the immediate aftermath of the quake and then it went more into telling stories of people who had been affected and why. Now, more so, it’s about people who don’t have the opportunity to individually challenge CERA [Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority] or EQC [Earthquake Commission]. We’re doing stories holding them to account and getting action for them. And I’m not saying that we’re working for them individually to try and get them solutions. But if you have an example of an elderly woman who needed an emergency repair on her house, and she couldn’t get through to EQC, and she’s got a lot of problems - her roof is leaking, she comes to the media, we hassled EQC about it and they get embarrassed and fix it up ... just by highlighting issues we are getting action.” This comment seems to indicate that

the earthquake amplified the advocacy function that journalism does take on at times to the point where it became dominant in the reporters' understanding of their role.

The ability to make a phone call that could help people was appealing to many of the journalists in this study. And of course, such a stance is bound to influence what they selected as news or chose not to report. Former TV3 journalist Juanita Copeland says the ability to help people could be a reward even when no story eventuated: "I did a couple [of things] just using my position and knowledge to help people. I had a really lovely old couple in Bexley, and they couldn't get anyone to check out their house, and I just put one phone call into Gerry Brownlee's office and there was an EQC person there within two hours and they were just beside themselves happy, and that never made a story. But it was kind of nice to help people who were completely out of their depth."

The important point to make here is that the want to help, and advocate for people, stems from the complex interactions Christchurch journalists had with the earthquake event itself, the aftermath, and their consequent dealings with their fellow quake survivors. Significantly, in a situation where journalists were straining to help people, there were likely to be repercussions for their relationships with sources, especially officials.

Two of the categories that make up the advocacy theme relate directly to how journalists interact with officials in a disaster. The "conflict with officials" (6.06%) and "officials helpful" (3.22%) interpretive themes mostly relate to different stages of the earthquake story and indicate a change in viewpoint for journalists covering the story. In the immediate days after the earthquake, when journalists wanted to help people with basic disaster response information and officials wanted to get that information out by any means, the relationship between reporters and their sources was mutually beneficial.

The Press’ Martin van Beynen says there was a sense that “everyone was a hero”, officials included, and there was a feeling that journalists and officials were “in this together”. In terms of getting the basic disaster information most journalists believed officials did their best in trying circumstances, so there was a willingness to, for want of a better term, cut them some slack in the initial days after the event.

A broadcast journalist, who declined to be named, says the relationship with official sources started well and reporters could get the information they needed to help people make sense of what had happened. On the day itself the journalist was surprised with the open response from disaster officials based in the Environment Canterbury building. “We signed in and there were key people there from fire, ambos [ambulance personnel], police - all the sorts of people in there - and council people obviously. And they were updating on the whiteboard and we just went around and asked what their key messages were and then rang that through to Wellington and gave them bullet points of news.” Of course, journalist and official were focused on the same goal at that point - communicating vital information to a confused and fearful public - so the relationship was essentially complementary in nature.

The tension between local reporters and officials developed over the role of the journalist. Local reporters felt they were important helpers and advocates for their community - that was a role not necessarily appreciated by officialdom. Perhaps the first indication of tension between local journalists and officials appeared in relation to the setup of inner-city cordons and rules for who could enter. From the interviews, photographers were the first to raise the theme of conflict with officials. That conflict stemmed directly from what they saw as restrictions on their ability to tell the story of what was happening in the central city.

The photographers in this study are attuned to their role of “recording history” with their images and view restrictions on where they can go as limiting their ability to

show what is happening to their audience. Many of the journalists noted that in “recording history”, which accounts for 2.58 per cent of interpretive themes, they were acting in a way that could help the community’s collective memory of the event. Press photographer John Kirk Anderson says local media should have pushed harder to get into the central city red zone. “It is history, absolute history, and we’re the recorders of it. I mean, we’re not the only recorders but 100 years from now it will be our stuff they’re looking through because it will be archived.”

The relationship with officials, as noted, changed over the course of time and reflects the move from an emergency situation to one where journalists were writing stories about people and organisations dealing with earthquake-related issues. In an event of this scale those issues can range from lack of basic services to complex reports on insurance and rebuild issues. Coen Lammers describes how the conflict with officials developed: “The earthquake was just the start of it: the rebuild, the insurance issues, the whole cathedral debate, they are all great issues. They are examples of certain bodies just trying to keep things on their own and *The Press* is just prodding away on behalf of the public. It gives the public a platform through letters and other things. If you are an advocate for the general public to hold big bodies to account and you can prove it, then fine ... We seem to be the only ones who have some clout to hold these bastards to account.” Lammers is explicit in his use of the word “advocate”, when describing how the newspaper worked for the public, which is representative of many of the other interviewees. In such circumstances the relationship between the media and officials can become a “them and us” situation where conflict is a natural by-product. This stems from advocacy putting them into conflict situations with officials and because officials did not recognise the legitimacy of the advocacy role.

Martin van Beynen says the relationship with officials became a lot more “antagonistic” in the recovery phase - a position representative of most journalists in this study. “There has been so many delays and frustrations and mistakes and cock-ups

that we have got a much more antagonistic relationship with a lot of people now. We've often got them on the backfoot, they're often stressed and tired and it's a much more difficult environment anyway. There is much more of ringing up and saying this person has said you've done this, you haven't done this or that you fucked up this or whatever, there are a lot of personal stories. Just look at the Housing Corp [a story about the lack of repair work on state-funded housing units for those on lower incomes] thing, they're very embarrassed that we've highlighted their slowness in getting their buildings repaired and so we have constantly got bad news for everyone we call and they spend all day dealing with that.' Most of the journalists in this study acknowledge that officials did not face an easy job in the city's recovery. However, they do not see this as a reason for restricting their investigation of issues. In the journalist's eye the city's recovery is helped by their reporting. There is a long-standing criticism that journalists can be somewhat socialised into the world of their sources (Blumler and Gurevitch 1981, Tuchman 1978, Reich 2007), but what the Christchurch earthquake showed is that in the immediate post-disaster period journalists' powerful sense of vocation influenced that relationship. Their relationship with officials could also be coloured by their personal experience of the earthquake and the long recovery period - when it is their own homes awaiting repair it would seem only natural that a disdain can build regarding official action.

Closely related, then, to the "conflict with officials" category is the "recovery watchdog" (4.51 per cent) theme. They can cut across each other at points. Coen Lammers, above, with his colourful comment about "holding the bastards to account" is suggesting that the local media's prime role is as a watchdog. Such notions adhere to long-held beliefs that the media can act as a Fourth Estate holding up the operation of government and officialdom to public scrutiny. TV3 Christchurch bureau chief Phil Corkery says the watchdog role played by the media on officials and elsewhere was important. "The pressure of the media is one of the few brakes on the insurance

industry in trying to keep the buggers honest.” Press photographer Dave Hallett says the earthquake helped to refocus what is important for the newspaper to cover: “I do think it [the earthquake] has focused their [reporters, editorial managers] attention here back to what we should be doing, keeping the bloody bureaucracy honest. That had fallen away.” For Christchurch journalists the sense that they were living out the basic tenets of traditional journalism rhetoric - providing a public good, helping people and meeting a social need - was an extremely rewarding feeling. Christchurch journalists viewed themselves as playing the classic role of the “Fourth Estate” keeping officialdom and politicians honest. It is a role that Hampton (2010) says is important, but is rarely achieved because of the commercial pressures faced by media.

The final two categories - “only quake news is important” (1.93 per cent) and “positive stories are best” (1.80 per cent) - are small in relation to the other themes that make up the reporter as advocate theme. In essence, the “only quake news is important category” represents a conclusion from individual journalists that reporting on earthquake-related news reflected what their audience and editorial managers wanted. It also reflects a belief that the best way to help their audience was by reporting on earthquake issues. The “positive stories are best category” highlights that some journalists felt reporting news with a “positive bent” would help to uplift their readers/audience from the misery that they experienced during and after the earthquake. This category, similar to some of those discussed above, was most likely to appear in the immediate post-earthquake period when a focus on people helping each other was seen as a way of finding positives from the event. These categories are likely small because they are short-lived responses experienced in the immediate post-disaster period. Those participants who mentioned the above did also talk about the long-term need to help people find solutions to their problems.

The “reporter as advocate theme” is intertwined with those of being “part of the story” and “attached to audience”. What took place in Christchurch is reflective of

Joseph's (2013:8) observation that: "When handled ethically according to the telling by the subject, both the impulse by the trauma subject to tell and the empathetic responses and re-renderings of the journalist join to form a type of advocacy journalism - in the public interest." The want to advocate for people and on specific issues reflects a renewed focus on the media's role as a cheerleader of sorts for its community post-disaster. In this environment journalism is not seen just as a means of reporting events, but as a tool to help people and the community. The Christchurch journalism culture changed to amplify the role of journalistic advocacy.

Attached to audience

Journalists' feeling of an increased connection with their audience is the key factor in the attached to audience theme, which makes up 22.5 per cent of all themes recorded. On some level, Christchurch journalists felt more personally involved in their reporting of the earthquake than news in a more routine environment - they, to some extent, were no longer standing outside looking in, but were in the middle of events. That attachment naturally extended to their audience. Trying to adhere to traditional notions of objectivity or professional detachment is challenging in such a traumatic event. All those interviewed indicated they felt in some way closer to their audience. The barriers they once thought existed between the "media" and the "public" were pulled down. The interviews indicate, however, that those perceived barriers would be slowly rebuilt over time, but still not, in journalists' minds, to the extent they once were. This phenomenon can be viewed from two, not mutually exclusive, viewpoints. First, journalists shifted away from an independent, distanced objective model towards one more engaged with the audience. Second, although journalism is viewed by some commentators to be in a crisis in terms of its engagement with the public (Zúñiga & Hinsley 2013) - because of economic forces and the rise of online social media - the Christchurch earthquake acted to give journalists a strong sense of validity to their connection with people because the news was a valuable resource for the audience.

For example, *Press* reporter Martin van Beynen says members of the public were easier to deal with and grateful for the media's efforts in getting out information and that helped his journalism. "It made it easier for me as a reporter because people realise we've all been through the same thing, which is quite important I think. I think we had a better response because people thought no-one has escaped this, we've all been through much the same experience." Many of the interviewees repeated similar sentiments - journalists felt closer to their audience and the public, according to reporters, saw the value of what local journalists were doing and respected their working through difficult circumstances.

TV3's Hamish Clark says he appreciated the compliments from strangers who thanked him for his efforts. "The public, most people you bump into say 'thanks for the coverage'. They may be confusing us with someone else, but that is fine, the coverage has been good. We've been voicing their concerns. They also know we live in Christchurch as well and have been going through the same things. We are here to try and help."

A radio journalist, who declined to be identified, says the closer relationship with the public had a direct impact on how she interviewed people for stories. "Most of my phone interviews [before the earthquake] were about an average five minutes because you go in and you know what you want to get out of someone. You ask your questions, get your sound bite, and then out you come and you know where to cut your stuff. On average when I spoke to people in Christchurch it was more like 15, 20 minutes, sometimes more. And it is because they want to know about your experience too. And they would ask 'where were you?' and you'd talk about that and they want to know about you." This is an interesting point, because it indicates that journalists' sense of an increased attachment to the audience altered the way in which they interacted with them.

However, as noted above, that closer relationship with the individuals faded over time. While journalists felt their primary task in the disaster recovery phase was to provide useful information for their audience and to challenge aspects of the long, often difficult march back to normality, which will be discussed later in this chapter, they also recognised that their readers and viewers had tired of the media.

A journalist, who declined to be named, offered what might be considered an extreme view 14 months after February 22: “I think the public’s attitude to *The Press* has gone back to that more normal nosey bastard kind of opinion of us. When we put the story up about us going back into the CBD there were comments on the website kind of like ‘aren’t there lots of gutters you can work in across Christchurch’. There was a honeymoon where they thought we were great and then it has returned to ‘all journalists are scum’.”

At this point it is worth reiterating that questioning the public about their views regarding the media’s coverage of the Christchurch earthquake, and their relationship with them, would be an interesting issue to investigate. Although not within the scope of this study, it would help to confirm whether the connection between the media and their audience was a reciprocal relationship in the immediate post-quake environment or more a projection onto the audience by journalists.

For a significant number of the journalists interviewed, the February event highlighted notions of “community” - what bonds a city, society or group and how that can be sustained in a disaster environment. Although the “community is important” interpretive frame makes up a relatively small percentage of total frames it indicates that reporters were looking beyond their own professional needs to consider how their stories affected the significant social bonds that bring people together. For example, then CTV reporter Emily Cooper says: “You sort of have such a sense of community now, more than you did before.” That sense of community, says Cooper, guides what

a journalist is interested in covering and can influence traditional notions of objectivity. “I think ... you can remain objective, but it’s really hard for example when you’re covering the city council and you know someone is going through this and someone is going through that, it’s hard to divorce yourself.” Journalists, therefore, do not simply feel part of the community, or more attached to its members, but they feel they are reporting specifically for “their community”. This is probably a less radical idea for journalists in that it is an extension of what could be considered part of their normal role. Donsbach (2008) says journalists’ role perception can have an impact on how they go about their work and how they will interact with sources. After the earthquake Christchurch journalists’ saw their role as one to advocate for their community, to whom they felt more attached and not to act primarily as gatekeepers.

Press illustrations editor Richard Cosgrove says he was interested in focusing on images and stories of people helping each other - a community coming together to deal with the disaster. “I’d been a cynical journalist for years and I thought the first disaster we get people are just going to fuck off and head for the hills, but I was really impressed the community itself stepped up.” Cosgrove’s comment mirrors what many studies (Bretherton and Ride 2011, Tierney et al 2006) have found - that post-disaster, people want to feel they are part of a community and will strive to help others. Often, media coverage is at odds with such a belief. For example, many US media organisations, more often than not from outlets outside of New Orleans, were criticised for their coverage of Hurricane Katrina, which inflated incidents of violence and looting, promoting a belief that society’s structures were disintegrating (Bretherton and Ride 2011, Tierney 2006). It is also worth reiterating at this point that Cosgrove’s comments indicate the self-awareness of the journalists in this study, who do not sit outside what their audience is experiencing, but view themselves as sharing a common understanding and bond of experience with them. Much sociological scholarship on the media, as noted in the literature review, has focused on the various news values,

external forces and ideologies that can influence journalists, but after the earthquake the over-riding consideration for reporters was the conscious need to reflect and help the community.

Therefore, Christchurch journalists believe they played a vital role in helping their community recover post-earthquake through the stories they wrote. *Press* reporter Glenn Conway says: “People kept on talking about the paper coming out on February 23 and that reinforced to me how much of a valuable role we have ... Every day I think to myself we have a really important role in this city and let’s not take that for granted.” Therefore, their role is not one that stands apart from the disaster. Instead, they related to their audience in a different, more attached way, and their news selection was likely to be influenced by a more people-oriented focus.

It is also worth noting, that the sense of attachment to their audience and being part of a community dealing with a disaster motivated some reporters to help others outside of their work commitments. *Press* photographer Don Scott took time off work to help people in Christchurch’s badly damaged eastern suburbs. The earthquake also had an impact on what and whom he was prepared to photograph. Scott explains: “I spent two days, the first two days that I had off, I went and borrowed a digger off a mate in Rangiora and I got my kids and a couple of other friends of theirs and went and dug liquefaction out of the eastern suburbs and then a week later I wanted to do it again on my day off and work hired a digger for me this time because I couldn’t get my friend’s. And the guy that I was hiring it off in Rangiora gave us a 50 per cent discount. You had to get stuck in because there was so much that wasn’t being done. The roads were being cleared but none of these guys were able to clear driveways so these people couldn’t get into their homes. I saw one guy when I’d been out on the digger. He was in a wheelchair with a rake trying to get liquefaction off his drive. It was the third time he’d done it. I never photographed the guy because I couldn’t, I just had to help him.” The notion of journalistic objectivity says reporters should stay distanced so as to see

the event or issue properly, to bear witness and not get involved, but the majority of journalists in this study believed they could be attached to the audience and still represent the truth of what was happening - or in many cases they believed it was the only valid and viable way to report the trauma of the disaster.

The interpretive categories “empathy for victims” (5.41%), “emotion important to coverage” (1.03%) and “people’s experiences matter” (4.25%) show that sharing the experience of the disaster with their audience can alter the way in which journalists approach their news stories and relationships with sources. Each of these three categories points to an emotional and personal connection with the audience.

That journalists expressed a greater sense of empathy for victims of the earthquake would seem a natural response to significant levels of human suffering and trauma. Long (2013:18) says “empathy is a concept generally understood to mean the ability to identify with and understand somebody else's feelings or difficulties, and is considered a vicarious response to viewing others’ distress”. Empathy, then, helps a person to search for a better understanding of another’s experience. In the case of the Christchurch earthquakes that empathy was fuelled by a shared experience of the event. The empathy journalists felt for quake victims would more often than not be expressed in terms of taking a careful or softer approach to seeking comment from those affected. *Press* reporter Sam Sachdeva says that feeling of concern for victims extended to showing them news copy before it was printed - a significant concession for a journalist to make given professional conventions relating to freedom of the press and censorship. “I think maybe there are more concessions made like seeing the copy before publication, where maybe previously we might have drawn a line in the sand ... It has caused problems, but I think the point is it may not have happened in the past.” Several interviewees noted they would offer stories for checking to sources where sensitive topics were covered, including tributes for the dead or items on the severely injured. *The Press’* Martin van Beynen says local journalists had greater

understanding for people. “I did have some reservations about doing that [approaching victims for comment] because I just didn’t want to intrude on people’s grief. It must have been an incredibly stressful time for them.” From a different perspective, TVNZ journalist Vicki Wilkinson-Baker says it could be personally difficult dealing with victims. “I found it very depressing talking to older people because there was a very real chance they wouldn’t get a new home, of a similar value, in their lifetime. Instead of enjoying their last five or 10 years, it would be one big long battle.”

Radio New Zealand reporter Rachel Graham says a feeling of empathy with the Christchurch community could lead to self-censorship in some instances, especially immediately after. “I felt quite conscious of how bad it was and you didn’t want to make it sound like it was without hope or make it sound worse than it was. I was conscious of that and you’re looking at this building and thinking ‘that’s not good’. And there is that part of you that doesn’t want to say they are all dead and there is no hope.” Therefore, a sense of empathy for victims could impede news gathering in some ways by preventing the asking of difficult questions or, in the case of showing people stories before publication, inviting the cutting of material. Conversely, it also had the power to strengthen the relationship with sources. One local reporter, who declined to be named, said a softer approach to victims of trauma bolstered the relationship with the public. “It’s a lot more sensitive [the approach to victims] because it’s a whole community in trauma ... I think we are a lot more sensitive to families but we still have to get them and cover their stories. There is probably more empathy.” In this instance, the journalist is indicating that the increased sense of empathy is about their ability to see outside of their own professional needs to report the story because of the closer attachment to the audience.

A sense of empathy for victims is closely tied to the theme “people’s experiences matter”. Collective trauma suggests journalists caught in a disaster in their hometown are more likely to consider how the event influences individuals and try to explain

what is happening through their experiences. *Press* reporter Georgina Stylianou says the earthquake highlighted how important it is to tell stories with ordinary people's experiences in them. Just walking the streets and talking to people was a significant part of the coverage she says: "I ended up walking around Bexley and just talking to people and writing about what was going on in their lives, going to one of the food shelters and talking to young families. I spoke to the cops doing the reassurance patrols and they showed me this house of an old woman who couldn't get out and she sat there and they were trying to give her water and blankets." Radio journalist Rachel Graham says the earthquakes show how important it is to provide a cross-section of people's experiences not only for the breadth of coverage, but because it highlighted particular issues. "And it can be quite satisfying as a reporter to say that, look, we do actually want to tell people about what is going on in this little part of town and area," she says. In the case of the Christchurch earthquake, the interviewees in this study felt a tangible connection with their audience that drove them to make a concerted effort to report and understand what mattered to individuals.

However, *The Press*'s Olivia Carville did note, 14 months after February 22, that while people were the focus of stories in the initial weeks, coverage returned to highlight political and official action as the recovery process dragged on. "I think we've moved from the political stories to the people stories quite a lot. But at the same time now it has been long enough, we're getting back to the politics. I'm trying to get the people in stories." Carville's comment mirrors that expressed by a journalist above, who noted the relationship with the public returned to a more normal stance over time. However, she is still motivated by a desire for strong people-focused stories. The content analysis results in the next chapter will help identify whether there are any enduring effects from the disaster with regard to news selection focused on people's experiences and problems. The implication of those comments is important because it suggests that the closer connection with the audience after the disaster was a time-limited phenomenon

and part of the trauma that is moved beyond as people's personal and professional lives return to a more normal situation. The content analysis results will provide more information on the change in relationship with sources, and use of them, and a clearer understanding of whether the attachment to the audience was a short-lived occurrence.

The "emotion important to coverage" interpretive frame is one of the smallest measured. The comments made by interviewees about highlighting the emotional aspect of people's experiences almost exclusively came from photographers or camera operators. For example, *Press* photographer Kirk Hargreaves noted the importance of capturing the emotion of events - whether they be positive emotions in response to the rescue of someone from a building or the grief and fear of dealing with trauma. Hargreaves says he is proud of a photo that captured an old man's emotional upset: "One that really stands out for me was one I took two or three weeks after the earthquake. It was of an old fella who lived in this house for ages and he had a sick wife and he's just on the street crying, he sort of breaks down in tears. It's just a shot of his face but behind him there is this other dude cruising along having a smoke with a mop over his shoulder like he is going to help the clean-up. It's just a sort of weird, bleak moment of the clean-up and the upset. This poor bastard had no idea what was going to happen to him." Given that all the interviewees discussed their experiences in emotive terms it is unclear why those using the written word did not mention the importance of emotion in their coverage more often. Some scholars argue that emotion is becoming more important in the news and is viewed by media as an important part of their disaster coverage (Wahl-Jorgensen and Pantti 2013), but in this study emotion is not a big theme in terms of journalist' self-understanding of what happened to them and their reporting. Perhaps, the lack of comments about emotion suggests that the journalists' trauma should not be reduced to a base level of emotions only. Emotion alone, therefore, is not sufficient to describe experiences they have thought through in such depth.

Although this theme is relatively small, “outside media annoy” category raises some interesting issues. After February 22, New Zealand journalists from elsewhere in the country were sent to Christchurch by outlets including TV3, TVNZ, Fairfax Media and APN to help the locally-based colleagues. Most Christchurch journalists appreciated the help. However, there were instances where local reporters were upset by their colleagues. One journalist, who declined to be named, says of her workmates: “Much as I appreciated people coming down to recover and relieve us so we could have a break and I know it is the nature of the journalist, but it kind of pisses me off that kind of desperation to cover a disaster. There were two journalists, friends of mine, real good people, who had been desperate to come down in the first few days and one of them had a cold and the other one felt like they were getting sick. And I remember them saying they wanted to come down but they were unhappy about getting sick. And I remember just thinking, that’s why people want to come down.”

Media from Australia, Japan, the United Kingdom and other countries also arrived. From the interviews, many of the local journalists found themselves bristling at the behaviour of these journalists. For example, Newstalk ZB reporter Jo Scott found herself in the situation of admonishing an Australian TV crew for their behaviour. “There was one time when I was really annoyed with an Australian television network,” she says. “It was when they were - we were all outside the CTV building, and news came through that they’d found a pocket of 15 people alive inside and were communicating with them. It turned out not to be true. But Emily Cooper the CTV reporter was there and I heard the news and said ‘Where is Emily? I need to tell her’ because I knew her. And one of the Australian reporters said ‘please don’t tell her, please don’t tell her we’re about to interview her on air and I want to tell her on air’. And I looked at her and said ‘no, that’s not OK. You are not going to stage something

that important and get mileage out of that so you could get some emotional coverage’.’

Elsewhere, as noted in the case stories chapter from the examples of Iain McGregor and Amanda South, journalists felt more connection to their own community than they did to notions of professional ties and similarities with journalists who arrived from outside of the city. *Press* photographer John Kirk-Anderson, who has covered disasters overseas including the Asian tsunami, said local journalists sometimes restricted themselves with regard to what they were prepared to do for stories because of their connection to the city. “If I was an outside media here in those first few days you might take more risks, you wouldn’t self-censor, you would push harder. But the fact that you live here and you know these people you do tend to back-off.’’ This is an important issue as it highlights that local journalists are inclined to be more restrained than outsiders in terms of their news selection and behaviour towards sources, and highlights the increased empathy they felt for others. They might find themselves less inclined, for example, to push people to provide answers to difficult questions.

The arrival of outside journalists also placed extra pressure on officials, who, according to local journalists, started to lump all reporters in the same basket, no matter their links to the city or story. This made it harder to get sources to comment, local journalists say, and created a greater sense of “them and us” between the media and officials. Cameraman Joe Morgan says some outside media tried to break cordons and play other “dirty tricks” to get stories. TVNZ’s Joy Reid notes: “It wasn’t just the internationals, it was everyone that came from out of town - they sort of saw it as an adventure or a career-making adventure and they’d kind of be all excited and I’d be like ‘guys just remember what you’re seeing here’ but I’m totally guilty of that from previous stories too.’’

Press photographer David Hallett says media from outside of Christchurch got “people’s backs up because they were a lot pushier”. “We had 17 out-of-town photographers here after the third or fourth day and they sort of came in and they were just all gung ho and they were a different breed to those media people who had lived through it. They were emotionally detached, they didn’t live here, they didn’t know anyone, they didn’t walk past these buildings everyday on their way to work. You’re conscious of the fact that it could have been you in those buildings.” Hallett’s comments show some journalists did frame their comments in terms of what they considered “the right” emotional response to the event.

Press journalist Keith Lynch sums up the thoughts of many Christchurch-based reporters when he says: “Some of their [overseas media] behaviour I found a little bit over the top. There was obvious sensationalising when you watch these people from Australian TV do their piece to camera. And some of the behaviour of some of the photographers a week afterwards during the minute silence, taking totally unnecessary pictures when they were taking a minute silence, was a little irritating. They were in people’s faces and there was no need for pictures and that much clicking of cameras ... there were elements who were a bit upsetting because it’s your city and you’ve been through a lot.” The fact that Christchurch journalists chose to identify with the trauma and feelings of their community rather than use media tactics they might consider using in other circumstances, highlights the extent that some could not detach themselves from their reporting or those caught up in the disaster.

As a contrast, many of the reporters in this study covered the Pike River mining disaster, which claimed the lives of 29 men on the South Island’s West Coast in November 2010, but did not feel the same level of attachment to that story or those involved because they were not part of the local community. Jo Scott says: “I remember when I worked at Pike that was devastating and sad and I found that very hard, but I wasn’t personally affected by it. I could spend 24 hours a day working on

that story. But in Christchurch I had a house in ruins, children who were distressed and I had a husband who needed me so there was always that pull to finish work on time and not go home wrecked from having worked extremely long days so I could be supportive and helpful when I got home.’’

The “part of story” and “attached to audience” categories have been discussed first because they feed into local journalists’ belief that they are advocates for their community. The argument is simple - journalists who feel part of the story and more attached to their audience will want to advocate on their behalf to solve issues, push officials harder and help the disaster recovery. However, there is likely a point in time after the disaster where journalists still want to advocate for their community but the sense of a closer connection has faded. As noted above, the content analysis results will provide more insight into this issue.

Ethics

The ethical complexities that come with reporting tragedies and disaster have been discussed at length in popular literature and the media (Long 2013) and it is not the aim of this research to re-traverse this ground. However, many of the points discussed in this chapter are also connected to ethical problems that stem from the unique reporting challenges the earthquake posed. Those questions, on a generic level, can include: should I help that injured person or first report what is happening?; should I take a photo of that dying person or put my camera down?; should I interview the grieving family members of a disaster victim or leave them alone?; should we publish that photo of a body or injured person? A shift toward a less detached mode of reporting is also an ethical matter because journalists used a different framework for their reporting. This research, in its interview design, did not specifically ask a question of interviewees about the ethical choices they faced. However, many participants did discuss their ethical concerns when answering the question about their

experiences on the day of the quake and their approach to victims of the event. The ethical category accounts for 2.06 per cent of measured themes and mostly relates to the days and weeks after the event. The aim of this study is not to provide an in-depth analysis or discussion of journalism ethics in a disaster, though other researchers will find it a valid area for focus. In saying that, a brief description of some of the ethical issues journalists mentioned in their interviews is a worthwhile exercise, as it illuminates reporters' reflexive approach to their experiences and work.

One reporter, who declined to be named, says the ethical questions faced by journalists on the day of the earthquake were challenging. The reporter had discussed those issues with colleagues. The reporter, like many, found it difficult to differentiate between his professional role and the more "human" urge to rush in and help those in need. In one instance he watched someone with a dead body. "It was a very difficult ethical decision at that point. Do you talk to the person who is about to lift that dead body into the back of a ute or do you just stand quietly and observe and write it all down? In that situation I decided it was better to quietly observe it." Muller (2010:7) in his study of the February 2009 Australian bushfires, which had a similar death toll, found there were occasions where some reporters had halted their professional roles because "they believed the needs of the human beings in front of them were more important than their work". A majority of the respondents in this study, although in many cases they are obviously conflicted about their actions, did not stop to help earthquake victims. Instead, they saw their job as to report the event or take photos so the world could see what was happening. Muller (2010) noted that the Australian bushfires placed reporters in a position where they often decided what was right or wrong according to what each individual journalist thought. The same could be said of journalists in Christchurch.

For example, another journalist, who declined to be named, says the unique and extremely stressful events on February 22 meant she was not interested in asking people for comment. "I didn't even want to interview people, there was no inclination.

I thought ‘fuck it’.” Of course, ethical decisions can affect news coverage in terms of source use. In this instance, the greater empathy that reporters had with their audience, which is discussed above, led many to think more deeply about their questioning of people in traumatic situations, especially those who lost friends and family in the earthquake. This supports Muller’s (2010) study, which found that Australian journalists “were aware that they were dealing with people who had no experience of the media and were vulnerable to being exploited. They said they felt a responsibility to take this into account when choosing what to use and what to omit from their reports.” Christchurch journalists reacted in much the same way and many went to extra lengths to ensure they did not write reports in a way that would further upset earthquake victims.

In Christchurch, because the journalists felt they were part of the story, more attached to their audience and wanted to advocate for them, their perception of their professional role changed, which also could be considered an issue of concern for their journalistic ethics. However, the study participants tended to view the ethical issues they faced as related to one-off issues or earthquake-related events rather than conceptualising the disaster as changing their entire understanding of what constituted ethical behaviour. In many instances, the interviewees would discuss their ethical concerns in terms of grappling with their need to have greater empathy for those caught in the disaster. In that way ethics is a theme that arises in the context of the three major themes - they felt a greater connection with the audience and shared the trauma of the earthquake experience with them.

Journalists will always face tough decisions about whether to approach people in times of death and how to approach them. Olivia Carville’s case story was representative of what some journalists did - they approached people in grief with extra caution and then were open to letting them see the story before it was published. Ethically, that is an

interesting approach as most journalists would be taught that showing copy to sources before publication is frowned upon. It is more likely that local journalists would feel the urge to take such an approach given their personal experiences and proximity to the story, which would differ from the perspective of journalists arriving from outside the city.

Perhaps one of the most prominent ethical issues arising from the earthquakes was the use of film and photos that displayed what may be considered upsetting images. Choosing what to publish is a difficult conundrum for journalists covering an event of such magnitude in their hometown because their audience is so close, unlike disasters from faraway which generally allow news editors greater scope for the use of graphic footage. For the television journalists in this study there was no question about what they should film - their attitude was film everything and then let those in the newsroom/studio decide what was appropriate to air. TV3's Phil Corkery says his staff sent their footage to Auckland where it was put, in most cases, straight to air with a warning about possibly upsetting images. Cameraman Joe Morgan says that while decisions could always be made about censoring any footage down the production line it is important to actually have the material first. TV3's Jeff Hampton says footage, much of which was not used in the earthquake's aftermath because of concerns about its upsetting content, can be invaluable for future use by the authorities or in documentaries. Newspaper photographers took much the same attitude, although they were wary in the first hours of not upsetting people too much by being seen to take photographs that impeded rescue efforts or marked them out as getting in the way of helping others. *The Press*' senior staff who took part in this study acknowledged that they were careful not to print pictures that would be considered lurid with regard to people's injuries and suffering. However, that was juxtaposed with the need to represent the event in an honest and accurate fashion.

The photo published by *The Press*, which attracted more public debate than any other, is an excellent example of the ethical decisions journalists must make. The front page photo showed teenagers Kent and Elizabeth Manning waiting for news of their mother, Canterbury Television personality Donna Manning, who died in the CTV building. Several *Press* journalists mentioned the photo in their interview, the decision-making that led to its publication and the public response. The fact the photo's use was raised by journalists highlights the ethical issues it raised. Could public interest justify the use of a photo depicting grief in such a way?

Then *Press* deputy editor Ric Stevens says the photo, taken in a public place, helped to put a human face on the scale of the earthquake tragedy. He acknowledged that critics viewed the photo, placed on page 1, as an intrusion into the family's grief. However, that had been discussed and the newspaper decided that it was a powerful image to illustrate the earthquake's aftermath. Then *Press* editor Andrew Holden acknowledged the photo was "controversial". While publishing the photo was a judgement call, he believed it was the right decision because: "It was the truth, it was the truth of what families were dealing with at CTV." Justifying news selection decisions after an event can appear defensive, but the open discussion of such an issue shows that this study's respondents can be transparent and reflexive about the ethical issues they faced.

The major ethical concern arising from the interviews in this study relates to the notion of what can be described as "intrusion" - local journalists were more acutely aware that what they were doing could be seen as intruding on people at moments of extreme stress or grief. On the day, that meant being careful not to "intrude" on rescue efforts or be seen to act in a way that could be viewed as voyeuristic with regard to people's injuries. Even if challenging images were taken, newsrooms were notified and senior managers made decisions about whether to publish with warnings or to censor some of the material. Later, that concern about intrusion meant, when approaching people about discussing their grief or feelings, journalists took extra care to ensure people felt

comfortable with what they were doing; for instance showing them copy before publication. The Manning photo showed that the notion of “intrusion” required the consideration of difficult ethical issues for journalists and newsroom managers.

As noted at the top of this section, the ethical dilemmas arising out of the February 22 earthquake are not a core concern for this study. However, there is no doubt the disaster challenged local journalists to often make individual ethical decisions in an extreme situation that had the power to influence their use of, and relationship with, sources. The theory of collective trauma suggests it is the local journalist’s proximity to the event and the people involved that brings those decisions into acute focus.

Interview results summary

The interview results show Christchurch journalists are open about how their earthquake experience influenced them personally and professionally. They were self-reflexive and gave a lot of thought to how the trauma affected their news work. The major themes and sub-categories illustrate that journalists can sit at the centre of a collective trauma feedback loop that has the power to influence them and their approach to stories and sources. They are bonded to the event and the people they share it with. Because they view themselves as part of the earthquake story they reappraise their role. They see themselves as being key actors in the earthquake recovery and, by their account, have a sense of wanting to advocate for “their community”. *The Press*’ Kamala Hayman provides an astute summary of how the February earthquake changed the newspaper’s reporting culture: “I think we are much more seen as, instead of just a witness to events, a reporter of events, that we are part of the community and we have a responsibility to help both with information and with leading issues and taking a stand on issues. We’re a player, a leader and participant.”

Therefore, journalists’ relationship with sources, they believe, can change as the disaster passes through its different stages from the event to slow recovery. The shift

from a position that “everyone is a hero” in the immediate disaster environment to one where officials are viewed with greater suspicion is reflective of the changing roles that each must play in the recovery phase of a news story - gone is the immediate mutually beneficial relationship to one more resembling “routine” news gathering, except with the added spice of journalists’ personal troubles relating to earthquake damage to their properties and those they know. The journalists’ relationship to the community, the interviews indicated, changed from the period immediately after the earthquake, where it was marked by a sense of extreme closeness to the audience, to a sense that the relationship faded over time, despite journalists still being committed to the notion of advocating for people.

The earthquake certainly acted to provide journalists with a sense of doing “God’s work” - they felt their journalism made a difference and as such their perception of what was important with regard to their professional practice was altered. Attachment to the story and those affected became the measure of what made for valid and worthwhile reporting. In saying that, it should be noted that individual journalists’ responses to the earthquake also varied, which reflects that response to trauma can be experienced at both an individual and collective level.

The next step of this study is to consider the content analysis results from *The Press*’ coverage of the earthquake. The content analysis in this study, as noted in the methodology, was designed to test whether the major themes emerging in the interview process can influence what journalists produce in stories, thereby indicating to what degree collective trauma can influence their journalism.

Content analysis results

This chapter reports on the findings of the content analysis of *The Press* newspaper for the four periods discussed in the methodology. The findings presented in this section will help identify the extent to which journalists' experiences influenced their news coverage in post-earthquake Christchurch. Scholars have long focused on the problem that what people say is not exactly what they do. Goffman's (1959) classic work on self-representation provided explanations for why people present themselves in a certain way. Obviously, as discussed in the interview section, journalists also have a perception of their own professional role (Donsbach 2008), which is likely to influence how they present themselves to an interviewer. The content analysis will help to determine if the statements by journalists in the interview data correlate with a measurable quantitative change in their news gathering practices post-quake. Then there is the secondary question of whether any correlation relates to a change in their journalistic roles. Collective trauma theory suggests the content analysis results will identify that journalists' experiences had a measureable impact on their news frames and use of sources - notably that they embraced a wider range of non-official sources and framed their stories in manner that reflected a less detached approach to the event and those involved. As discussed in the methodology, this content analysis is of newspaper texts only so issues relating to broadcasting and video footage cannot be explored. This section starts with the basic data relating to story numbers, then moves onto source use and the recording of frames in items.

The total number of stories (n=409) and photos coded in each period are shown in

Table 6:

Table 6: Total number of stories and photos

	Total stories	Total photos	% photos with stories
July 2010 - Sept 2010	115	56	48.69%
Sept 2010 - Oct 2010	97	43	44.32%
Feb 2011 - April 2011	88	48	54.54%
July 2012 - Sept 2012	109	69	63.30%

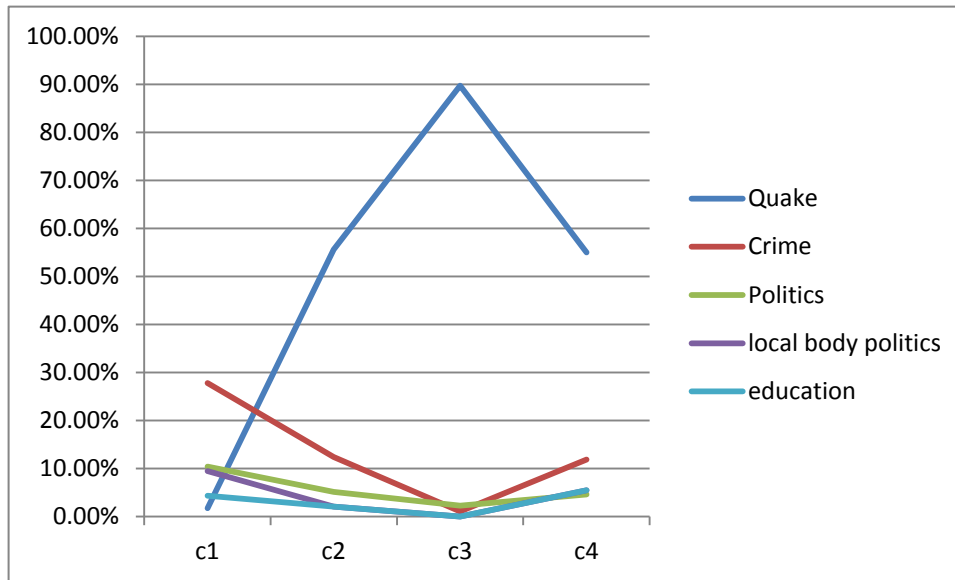
The reason for the drop in the number of stories coded in the immediate post-earthquake periods was explained in the methodology: the stories tended to be bigger - “wrapping” a lot of detail into one news item. Also, the photos used tended to be bigger in size; most likely because of the strength of the news photos the event provided. Papers were also restricted in size post-quake to 20 pages. It is difficult to pinpoint why the proportion of photos with news stories increased by nearly 30 per cent between July 2010 and September 2012. After the February earthquake the newspaper did return to a more routine use of photos - i.e. not images that could take up the bulk of a page - and the use of smaller photos probably boosted the number. However, even months after the earthquake there was an ample supply of what would be considered strong news photos.

The subject matter recorded for each coded story, shown in Table 7 below, highlights the impact the February earthquake, in particular, had on news coverage.

Table 7: Subject matter per story coded

Subject	Jul-10	Sep-10	Feb-11	Jul-12
Quake	2 (1.73%)	54 (55.6%)	79 (89.7%)	60 (55%)
Crime	32 (27.8%)	12 (12.37%)	1 (1.1%)	13 (11.9%)
Politics	12 (10.4%)	5 (5.15%)	2 (2.27%)	5 (4.58%)
Local body politics	11 (9.5%)	2 (2.06%)	0 (0%)	6 (5.5%)
Education	5 (4.34%)	2 (2.06%)	0 (0%)	6 (5.5%)
Health	12 (10.4%)	6 (6.18%)	2 (2.27%)	5 (4.58%)
Environment	5 (4.34%)	1 (1.03%)	0 (0%)	2 (1.83%)
Entertainment	5 (4.34%)	3 (3.09%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Economy/finance	2 (1.73%)	5 (5.15%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Property	3 (2.6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (2.75%)
Consumer affairs	4 (3.47%)	1 (1.03%)	1 (1.1%)	0 (0%)
Social issues	9 (7.82%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (0.92%)
Sport	5 (4.34%)	2 (2.06%)	1 (1.1%)	3 (2.75%)
Other	8 (6.95%)	4 (4.12%)	2 (2.27%)	5 (4.58%)

The trends for the first five subjects for each period are displayed on Figure 1 below:

Figure 1: Coding trends for first five subjects

The first thing to note from the above charts is the relatively atypical mix of news in the first (Jul-10) (c1) period before the earthquake sequence started. Crime (27.8 per cent) is most dominant followed by politics and health, each accounting for the primary subject in 10.4 per cent of stories. Local body politics is not far behind on 9.5 per cent. After these categories the share of coverage between the other subjects is relatively evenly shared. The earthquakes would immediately alter the news mix.

Following the first earthquake in September 2010 (c2) there is an immediate change in the focus of news coverage. Quake (55.6%) dominates news coverage and all other categories slump as a result. After the February (c3) disaster the focus on quake news (89.7%) shades all other subjects and well over a year later quake news (55%) is still the most dominant with crime reporting at similar levels to that after the September 2010 earthquake. Many studies suggest an inordinate amount of media coverage after a disaster is focused on aspects of crime, such as looting. However, Christchurch does not appear to follow that trend to any significant extent.

The reason the amount of earthquake news is substantially greater in February than September is reflective of the severity of the event in terms of its human toll, but also with regard to damage to buildings and property. The dominant subject after the February earthquake may also point to the extent local journalists were immersed in the event. It should also be noted that during the coding this researcher noticed that the news coverage returned to a more “normal” mix more quickly after the September earthquake than in February.

At first glance, then, it would appear an earthquake disaster has the ability to limit the diversity of coverage for a substantial period of time- the event is so large and significant that journalists focus their attention on it. The earthquake would meet any mix or list of news values - proximity, consequence, conflict, interest, novelty and prominence - that academics attribute to journalism. However, it is worth noting that the results could also point to a need for a wider focus in analysis on secondary subject matter, which was not coded for as part of the content analysis. Although the bulk of stories after February had the earthquake as their primary subject matter they could include issues relating to property, the economy, environment or health. For example, it is accurate to say that no matter what round *Press* journalists held after February 22 every story they did was in some way connected to the earthquake. Therefore, the council reporter might do stories on how the earthquake had ruined council sports fields, prevented a council political meeting for lack of venue or raised questions about council policy regard earthquake damage. Elsewhere a political reporter might have based their story on comments from the Prime Minister relating to the earthquake's impact on the regional and national economy. In these instances, the primary subject was earthquake, but there was a secondary issue covered. Of course, stories in times of “routine news” will have a similar primary, secondary subject make-up.

The results are significant because they indicate the power of a natural disaster to influence news selection. A majority of stories written by local journalists are seen

through the prism of the February earthquake and that continues at a high level for more than a year later. If this researcher was to code stories another year from the earthquake, then it is highly likely there would be fewer stories originating from that event, but the recovery period can last a long time.

Sources

In order to study how reporting practice changed, the decision was made to focus on source use. The sources chosen and their use are widely regarded as central in shaping news coverage. In particular, as the literature review discussed, scholars have established a strong bias to the use of institutional sources. Analysing the extent to which institutional sources are used tells us how far journalists are remaining within established patterns, reliant on authorities and other institutions and operating within journalistic norms. The main focus is to test whether the use of affiliated sources (those in positions of authority or with organisational ties) and unaffiliated sources (those with no apparent authority or organisational ties) changed as a result of the February earthquake. Looking at the use of affiliated sources provides a measure of the change of journalistic practice.

The first thing to note is the growth in number of sources per story from the first coding period to the last. In the July 2010 period *The Press* averaged 2.24 sources per story. That grew to 2.53 for the September 2010 period. The February 2011 period was identical at 2.53 sources per story. The average number of sources per story was highest in the last period at 2.61 sources per story. These figures, on the face of it, indicate the disaster encouraged journalists to seek a slightly greater number of sources, or voices, for their stories. However, an Anova single factor analysis showed the increase was not statistically significant with a p-value of 0.36. There was a large variance of the February coding period of 4.086073, which can probably be attributed

to the number of big “wrap” stories in that period with many more sources in them. This large variance may mask any measurable trend.

One of the key issues, though, is whether the increase in source use related to a greater diversity of sources or the increased use of the same speakers from the world of officialdom. Most significantly, the results show the use of sources jumped in the February 2011 coding period.

Table 8: Affiliated and unaffiliated source use

	Affiliated	Unaffiliated
Jul-10	78.3% (202)	21.7% (56)
Sep-10	77.6% (191)	22.4% (55)
Feb-11	62.8% (140)	37.2% (83)
Jul-12	81.4% (232)	18.6% (53)

The table above shows that the change between the use of affiliated and unaffiliated sources was slight from the first period and after the September earthquake. However, there is change after the February event with a drop of 14.8 percentage points in the use of affiliated sources and a corresponding rise in the use of unaffiliated people. The large swing back to affiliated source use in the final period, on the face of it, indicates journalists returned to a routine relationship with sources.

The author used T-tests to analyse the significance of changes between source use in July 2010 and February 2011 and then between February 2011 and July 2012 so as to take in the pre and post-quake periods. First, there was no statistically significant change in affiliated source use between July 2010 and February 2011 with a p-value of .2034. However, there was a significant change for unaffiliated source use between the periods with $t=1.97$ at a p-value of .009063 ($p < .05$). The test had degrees of freedom

of 129. The change in source use between February 2011 and July 2012 returned statistically significant results for both categories. The change in affiliated source use between the periods resulted in a p-value of 0.024 ($p < .05$) at $t=1.973$. The test had degrees of freedom of 176. The change in unaffiliated source use between February 2011 and July 2012 had a p-value of 0.015 ($p < .05$) at $t=1.975$. The test had degrees of freedom of 152.

The above tests confirm there was a significant change in source use from the period of routine news before the earthquake sequence started and then after the disaster itself in February 2011. There was a second significant change within 16 months as journalists returned to more routine daily news gathering once the immediate impact of the disaster had subsided.

Coding results for the institutional origin of the source and their position within that institution can provide a more nuanced view of what took place with regard to source use. The coding of the specific institutional origin of sources provided interesting results. The use of governmental sources fluctuated from 24.41 per cent (63) of total sources in the first period, decreasing at about 1 per cent per period to sit at 20.7 per cent (59) in the July 2012 period. That appears to indicate a trend away from the use of governmental officials and politicians or at the least a declining influence after the February earthquake. The average for all periods was 22.7 per cent.

The use of corporate/business sources oscillated from 12.8 per cent (33) of the total for the first period, 21.95 per cent (54) in the second, 11.21 per cent (25) for the third and settled at 15.43 per cent (44), approximately its average for all the periods coded. The reason for the increase in business-based sources for the second period can, in some way, be attributed to the lack of human death and injury after September 4. The September earthquake coverage tended to focus more on disruption to businesses in the immediate aftermath.

The use of non-government organisations started at 12.4 per cent (32) in the first period, dropped to 4.4 per cent (10) in the immediate post-February quake period and then finished at a high of 14.38 per cent (41) in the July 2012 period, which reflects the establishment of residents' groups to deal with earthquake-related property problems. Unsurprisingly, given the scale of the event and its human toll, the use of emergency service sources rose in the post-February period with 13 per cent (29) of the total, doubling that recorded after the September earthquake and almost twice the average of 7.5 per cent across all coding periods.

Notably, the use of sources from the education sector was relatively consistent at 4 per cent (8, 11 and 12 respectively) for all the periods except July 2012 when it climbed to 12.63 per cent (36). That jump can largely be attributed to the ongoing discussion in the recovery phase about the need for school mergers and closures in Canterbury. The increase in education sources does display how a single issue can alter the mix of voices in news articles. The use of local government sources was highest in the first period at 10.85 per cent (28) and in the July 2012 period at 11.92 per cent (34) respectively and averaged 8.8 per cent across all periods.

The "none" category, indicating people who held no institutional allegiance, followed the trend of source use discussed above. Overall, the above results tend to reinforce the argument that while official source use is dominant, the February earthquake did prompt reporters to diversify their use of people for comment by moving away from institutions, no matter how slightly, to make use of people without connections to specific organisations. This is significant as it backs the findings from the interview data - that journalists' sense of personal attachment to the earthquake story and those involved did alter their approach to their work. Because they viewed themselves as advocates for their community their source use changed.

The coding data recording the position that sources held provides further insight into how journalists altered their practices after the February earthquake. The categories for political leader, executive/business owner and spokesperson all indicate someone who holds a position of authority within an institution and the power to speak on its behalf.

The other seven categories represented the use of sources who did not hold positions of institutional power. These categories were an attempt to measure whether journalists turned towards the “average person” or “man on the street” more after the disaster. See tables 9 and 10 below.

Table 9: Breakdown of authority source use

Authority sources	July 2010	Sept 2010	Feb 2011	July 2012	Average
Political leader	23.25% (60)	15.04% (37)	22.86% (51)	15.43% (44)	19.15%
Executive/business owner	12.79% (33)	23.90% (59)	17.93% (40)	14.03% (40)	17.16%
Spokesperson	38.75% (100)	27.64% (68)	18.83% (42)	42.10% (120)	31.83%
Total	74.79% (193)	66.58% (164)	59.62% (133)	71.56% (204)	68.14%

Table 10: Breakdown of non-authority source use

Worker	1.16% (3)	1.62% (4)	1.34% (3)	5.26% (15)	2.35%
Victim	6.97% (18)	13% (31)	17.93% (40)	3.85% (11)	10.44%
Eyewitness	1.93% (5)	2.84% (7)	3.58% (8)	1.40% (4)	2.44%
Average person	10.46% (27)	9.34% (23)	14.34% (32)	12.98% (37)	11.78%
Perpetrator	0.77% (2)	1.21% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0.50%
Other	3.87% (10)	4.6% (12)	3.13% (7)	4.93% (14)	4.10%
total	25.16% (65)	33.42%	40.35% (90)	28.40% (81)	31.79%

The use of sources in positions of authority is highest in the first period at 74.79 per cent (193), but this drops by 15 per cent after the February earthquake to 59.62 per cent (133) before climbing back to near pre-disaster levels in July 2012. There is a corresponding climb in the use of non-authority sources to a high of 40.35 per cent (90) after the February earthquake before that slips back to a level still 3 per cent higher than the pre-disaster period 15 months after the event.

Within the source categories themselves, the use of politicians drops in the recovery process, while the use of spokespeople drops dramatically after the February earthquake before returning to higher than pre-disaster levels. The return to using spokespeople in the recovery phase may be connected to the establishment of large earthquake-related bureaucracies, including the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority, after the event to help repair the city and also the greater use of spokespeople for community-based groups representing residents on issues of concern to them.

The use of victims (17.93%) and the average person (14.34%) is highest after the February earthquake. The use of the average person still sits higher in the recovery coding period at 12.98 per cent (37) than it did before the earthquakes started. The figures indicate, in conjunction with those discussed above, that the February disaster did alter the way journalists selected their sources. After February 22 there was a marked shift toward the use of unaffiliated sources who did not hold positions of authority or represent an institution, at the expense of affiliated commentators. It appears that as time moved away from the extraordinary events of February 22 journalists retreated to a more routine use of sources, although the use of political leaders for comment did not return to pre-quake levels and the use of the average person was also higher 15 months after the event.

Frame results

Collective trauma theory suggests that the experience of the February earthquake would influence the stories that journalists chose to write and how they chose to frame them. Importantly, journalists help to make meaning of events through the use of frames (Schudson 2003). Framing recognises that every news story presents some issues and not others and allows journalists to process large amounts of information (Gitlin, 1980 cited in Allan, 2010; Entman, 1993). Studying the use of frames post-earthquake helps to illuminate how journalists' news selection was affected by the trauma they experienced. The frames in this study, as noted in the methodology, were drawn from the key themes in the interview section. Therefore, this study is not investigating the full range of journalistic frames studied by other scholars, but testing whether stories are framed according to the interview themes. The first substantive point that should be made before discussing the results is that there was a fair degree of agreement between the two analyses. Where the journalists talked of feeling an increased attachment to the audience and a want to advocate for readers in the interviews, then that is reflected by changing frame use. The coding of news articles for frames is outlined in detail below.

Table 11 shows the number of recorded frames with a figure in brackets indicating the percentage of total stories each frame appeared in. For example, the advocate frame was counted 53 times across 115 stories for the July 10 period, so it appeared in 46.08 per cent of stories. A story, as noted in the methodology, can have more than one frame.

Table 11: Recorded frames for each coding period

	Advocate frame	Part of story	Attached to audience	Ethics	Other
July 2010	53 (46.08%)	17 (14.78%)	35 (34.03%)	4 (3.47%)	28 (24.34%)
Sept 2010	57 (58.76%)	8 (8.24%)	55 (56.71%)	5 (5.15%)	16 (16.49%)
Feb 2011	71 (80.68%)	19 (21.59%)	63 (71.59%)	11 (12.5%)	5 (5.68%)
July 2012	75 (68.81%)	21 (19.26%)	49 (44.95%)	4 (3.66%)	10 (9.17%)
Average:	64 (63.58%)	65 (15.96%)	51 (51.82%)	6 (6.19%)	14.8 (13.9%)

The chart shows that after the February disaster the advocate, part of story, attached to audience and ethics categories appeared more often in stories than in other coding periods. The advocate frame was recorded in nearly 81 per cent of stories after February 22 and still maintained a higher than average level of 68.81 per cent 15 months later – 22 per cent higher than the first period coded. The part of story frame did not increase so dramatically. It dropped after the September earthquake, but then recorded its highest percentage scores in the February 2011 and July 2012 periods, which were both above average. The “attached to audience” frame jumped significantly in September 2011 - 22 per cent higher than in the first period - and then spiked in the February period at 71.59 per cent before dropping substantially 15 months later to 44.95 per cent, which although higher than in July 2010, remained below the average.

As noted in the methodology the “ethics” category is not treated as a frame in the same way as the other classifications because news stories themselves were unlikely to be framed in terms of the ethical problem encountered. Instead, stories where journalists were either placed in difficult ethical positions or faced hard ethical choices were noted. Not surprisingly the ethics category peaked in the February coding period,

although it was still relatively low compared to the other categories. The “ethics” category will not be discussed further in this chapter because of, as previously discussed, its different nature from the other frames.

The “other” category was used when no other identifiable frame could be found. Given the research design it is appropriate that the “other” category is highest in the pre-quake period and then starts to shrink in the September 2011 period before climbing again in July 2012. The “other” category will not be discussed further because it is not the focus of this research.

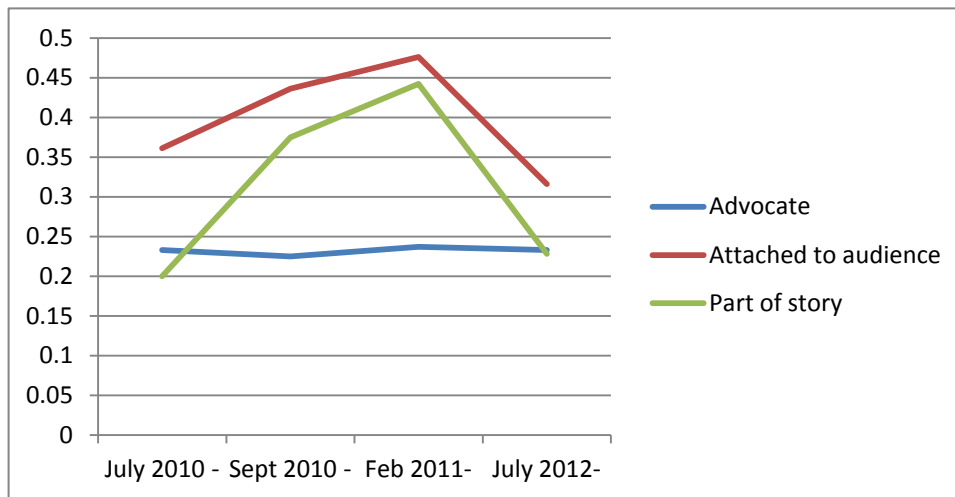
The average frame appearance across all stories, once the “other” and “ethics” categories are excluded, shows the extent to which the February earthquake changed news coverage. In the July 2010 period a frame - either “advocate”, “part of story”, “attached to audience” - was recorded at a rate of 0.9478 times a story. In September, that climbed to 1.288, followed by 1.863 frames per story after February and then back to 1.366 in July 2012, which indicates that the shared trauma experience can linger for a substantial amount of time after the major event - maybe more so for earthquakes with frequent aftershocks creating ongoing recovery issues.

Frame strength

The salience of frames was measured to identify whether the February earthquake increased the “strength” or “prominence” of frames in the news stories in which they appeared. As noted in the methodology, this was done by noting a 1 for yes when answering a coding question about the frames and a 0 for no. By adding the scores together an index was created for each frame, thereby indicating their strength in the news stories that they appeared. The average frame strength could then be determined for each coding period. For example, the advocate frame had eight questions for coding purposes. The number of questions (8) was multiplied by the number of stories (53) the advocate frame was recorded in for the July 2010 period to give a total

possible index of 424. The total actual index score from those stories (99) was then divided by the total questions asked for those stories (424) for frame strength of .233. Figure 2 below shows the frame salience for each period, which is then illustrated by the graph below.

Figure 2: Frame salience trends



The strength of the “advocate frame” does not alter to the same degree over the course of the coding periods as the other categories. However, it is at its highest after February 22 and then settles back to its starting level. The salience measure for the “attached to audience” frame climbs after both earthquake events before dropping to levels well below the first coding period and the average strength level. The “part of story” frame follows a similar track to that attached to audience category. The stronger “part of story” and “attached to audience” frames shows that what journalists said in their interviews about an increased sense of connection with their audience was reflected in their news reporting.

The “advocate frame” appears in more stories after February 2011, but is conveyed at similar strength levels in every coding period. The reason for this likely stems from the professional practices of Christchurch journalists that could limit the extent to which

they are prepared to openly advocate for their readers. It is much easier to do so, for example, in editorial and opinion pieces than news stories. Editorial and opinion pieces were not coded in this study and may provide stronger advocate frames than pre-February. The journalistic requirements for fairness and balance could restrict the strength of the advocacy frame, as could the expectation that reporting is neutral and advocacy is found in comment pieces. Conversely, it may be that journalists traditionally view advocacy as a core part of their role which could limit any change in its use, whereas the other two frames, “part of story” and “attached to audience” are not viewed as normal parts of reporting practice.

Content analysis summary

The content analysis results show journalists’ news selection in the post-disaster environment was singularly focused, unsurprisingly, on earthquake news. More than a year after February 22 earthquake stories accounted for more than half of stories coded. Their use of sources changed as a result of the disaster to reflect what they said in their interviews about wanting more “people” in their stories. Reporters sought out people who did not hold positions of power, which helped to push their news selection toward a greater focus on people’s experiences and helping them to solve issues. This reflects what journalists said in their interviews - they felt they understood what earthquake victims were going through and wanted to advocate for them. The author did not conduct a multivariate analysis because it wouldn’t help answer the research questions. The purpose was not to find out how variable A interacted with variable B but to confirm if these categories, derived from the interviews, were valid and persisted over time.

The content analysis shows the frames, or messages, journalists had in their news stories changed after the disaster. While use of the advocate frame increased and was

the most prevalent it did not increase in strength by a significant margin, indicating that journalists still hewed to their professional practices to some degree. The results indicate that collective trauma is a possible explanation for the change in approach to their news selection and relationships with the community because the content analysis results are, on several points, in agreement with what journalists said in their interviews. The conclusion chapter will discuss this in greater detail.

Conclusion

This thesis has striven to provide a greater understanding of how journalists' news selection and use of sources are affected by a traumatic event. The study, in part, was an attempt to answer Newman's (2009) suggestion that research should move beyond the consideration of psychopathology alone to consider problems that affect both journalists' quality of life, their views about the world and the impact on their practice of journalism. Specifically, this research has focused on how journalists' news judgement, their source relationships, use of news frames and role in society changed as a result of the collective trauma they experienced in February 2011.

A focus on personal trauma analysis and psychopathology alone, I argue, does not provide the right context from which to understand the changes in reporting practice after an event on the scale of the Christchurch earthquake. Psychological theory cannot alone explain how journalists responded because they were part of a community reaction to the event - it was not just a personal experience. Notions of news values or an increased emotional aspect to news reporting are inadequate to explain what happened to journalists' practices post-disaster because they fail to place reporters' experiences within the wider context of the new reality they shared with the public. A framework of collective trauma provides greater explanatory power because it places the change to journalists' reporting within the broader perspective of sharing their community's plight. All the respondents in this study said they felt a greater attachment to the public after the disaster. From this less detached position, journalists found different ways to tell stories, becoming more involved and connected with their audience because of the community's collective trauma. In effect, Christchurch journalists became, for a time, more responsive to their community's needs.

However, it would be wrong to assume collective trauma can explain all that happened to journalism in Christchurch after the earthquakes. There were other factors working

alongside collective trauma to help shape reporting practice. Print journalists, the content analysis shows, did not abandon their traditional reporting practices altogether, no matter what they said in their interviews. The content analysis results suggest journalists, in many cases, hewed to traditional restrictions on placing themselves explicitly in stories and not being over-zealous in advocating for people. The strength of advocacy frames changed little post-earthquake which suggests that journalists did not abandon their professional norms in some circumstances. However, the author does not believe those factors take away from the significance of the findings in this thesis. The construction of news is not a simple matter, but stems from a complicated mix of influences, both in times of “routine news” and extraordinary events (the February 22 earthquake), where different theories, such as that of collective trauma, can explain changes to journalists’ practices.

Contribution to scholarship

The author’s main contribution to journalism scholarship is the use of a theoretical framework of collective trauma to help explain what influenced Christchurch journalists’ work. The research was distinctive in using frames developed from the interview material - therefore linking journalists’ attitudes and beliefs about how their reporting changed with what was written in news stories. This differs from work by other scholars including Brunken (2006) and Roberts (2007). This study has shown Christchurch-based journalists used a different, less detached mode of journalism after the earthquake - especially in the period immediately after February 22. The change in reporting modes may be explained by their shared experience of collective trauma with their audience. Their news coverage reflected this. Journalists were no longer standing on the outside doing their stories about other people, but writing about those whom they shared a trauma experience with. This thesis argues that collective trauma was a key influence on journalists’ work post-earthquake, however, other factors can co-occur and future research could tease these out further. This study provides evidence that

while journalists do not abandon their professional practices altogether, traumatic experiences stemming from an event on the scale of the Christchurch earthquakes cause them to view their jobs quite differently and alter their news selection to reflect the greater attachment they have to their audience and the event. Christchurch journalists' attitude to sources and source use changed to reflect a greater concern for their audience. In essence, Christchurch journalists gave the ordinary citizen's concerns greater focus in their news stories as a result of the disaster.

The rich interview data was the cornerstone of this study. The methodological approach taken reflects a purposeful decision to compare the journalists' experiences and what they said with changes in their news writing. As such, the frames identified in the content analysis are connected to the interview material. The methodology adopted provide rich and reliable results as the validity tests show.

The material Christchurch journalists provided was valuable because of its honesty and it is worth repeating that the author believes his journalistic background helped to draw frank responses to questions. Reporters in this study clearly spent time in deep reflection about February 22 and what the event meant to them personally and professionally, which belies traditional notions of reporters being aloof from what they are covering.

The results from this study show reporters tried to make sense of the changes to their professional practice in terms of a shift from remaining detached and outside of events to a more activist and advocacy focused mode of reporting. This change in reporting modes, in many cases, had an almost therapeutic effect as reporters believed it helped them to not only cover the news better, but reach a greater personal understanding of what had taken place. Such a finding is close to what Usher (2009) and Roberts (2007) found in their work on Hurricane Katrina – that journalists felt they were part of the story they were covering. However, this study goes a step further by arguing that

collective trauma explains why journalists responded the way they did. This research shows it is wrong to view journalists simply as parts in a news machine. Instead, they were highly reflective and attuned to how their reporting changed and what it could achieve. After the earthquake reporters became part of a wider collective - that of a community that had shared a challenging trauma.

In the weeks after February 22, Christchurch journalists engaged with the public and their sources in a way that would have been difficult without the catalyst of the disaster and the trauma they experienced. The interview results and case studies show the justification for their news decisions stemmed from their closeness to the earthquake and its victims, which is at odds with the more traditional view that journalists should not become attached to those providing information so as to remain impartial. Members of the Christchurch media were required to communicate distressing events in detail to their audience, which is distinctly different from the notion they should distance themselves from the event as a kind of defence for the traumatic situation they faced.

This research supports previous work showing disasters create conditions for journalism to foster community cohesion and to alter notions of journalistic detachment as illustrated during September 11, 2001, when journalists and the communities they served were united in their sense of trauma (Rosen, 2002, Zelizer and Allan, 2011, Usher, 2009). In such conditions, the coverage becomes more personal for journalists and they developed a different mode of reporting than used in a time of routine news. That mode of reporting reflected a new shared reality between reporters and the community, which originated from a collective experience of trauma. By personalising the events more, Christchurch journalists helped to make them meaningful to the audience but that contradicts the process of emotionally distancing oneself from news stories (Novak and Davidson 2013). The sense of a bond with the community can help explain why Christchurch journalists did not fall back, to a large

extent, on the use of “disaster myths” relating to crime and community disintegration that appeared in previous news coverage after disasters (Bretherton and Ride, 2011, Dill, 2010). Those previous studies found reporters who arrived from outside the affected region were more likely to be personally distanced from events, which can heighten the risk of disaster myths arising.

The strong statements in the case studies and interview chapters about providing reporting that helped the community get through the disaster were indicative of the position reporters took. Interestingly, that proximity to the event and attachment to those involved prompted reporters to view themselves as different from journalists from elsewhere, who could not possibly, in their eyes, understand to the same extent what had happened. This highlights the extent to which local reporters felt they shared the earthquake experience with their audience.

Journalists’ strong feeling of advocating for “their community” was apparent in all the interviews, which is similar to studies done on Hurricane Katrina in the United States (Roberts, 2007, Brunken, 2006, Usher, 2009). A framework of collective trauma helps to place in a broader context how journalists’ view their role after a major disaster and the influences on their reporting. There was interplay between the event, journalists’ personal experiences, the wider community’s experience and newsroom practices. Journalists were participants in the disaster - and recognised themselves as such - and when combined with their position as a “carrier group” they became central to building a communal understanding of the Christchurch earthquake. Specifically, with regard to their reporting, being part of the story and attached to those involved fostered a sense that advocacy was the most natural mode of journalism for the situation.

The case studies and interview data showed local journalists placed immense stock in their own personal experiences of February 22. Their experiences were unique in that

so many faced what they considered a life-threatening situation and shared that with their audience. Because they experienced the event, as Coen Lammers noted, there was a feeling they innately knew where their reporting should focus and when it was time to move on to other issues. Journalists had a tangible sense of a new shared reality with their community. Donsbach (2004) noted reporters' news decisions are guided by a "shared reality" among journalists, dictated by their work process and the common frames they use for stories. The collective trauma experienced by Christchurch reporters extended that idea of a "shared reality" to the community at large, which acted to change journalists' use of news frames, in some instances, for a period of time, especially in the immediate post-disaster phase. For example, journalists focused on people's experiences and helping them to solve issues to a greater extent. However, while advocacy was the most prevalent frame in news stories post-quake, it did not increase in strength, which indicates some routine professional practices, such as not being seen as biased, will limit the change in reporting practices after a disaster.

Nonetheless, journalists' experiences and quake-related problems at home fed their belief they were uniquely qualified to report on the event - they viewed themselves as experts on the disaster. That stemmed from feeling a closer attachment to the audience and feeling like they were part of the story. Those two news frames were more prevalent in the post-disaster phase, but, they were not recorded at a rate that might have been expected based on the interview results. For example, the "part of the story" theme was the most prevalent in the interviews, but that did not translate to the same extent in news story frames. This illustrates journalists will hew to some of their traditional professional practices, for example, not placing themselves at the heart of stories, despite the unusual pressures a disaster places on them. Although collective trauma can be viewed as a useful tool to explain the changes Christchurch journalists made to their news selection, use of sources and news frames, there will always be

other factors, including professional norms, that must be considered as influences on their work.

According to Christchurch journalists the earthquake helped reawaken their journalistic zeal to hold officialdom to account and provide not just information, but answers and solutions to problems for their fellow earthquake victims. This influenced their news selection and use of sources, pushing it toward something more akin to a professional ideal long-held by journalists - that of the Fourth Estate keeping officials honest, but also actively helping people in their lives. It is an almost utopian version of what should drive reporters in their work and what they choose to write about. Given the emphasis placed in popular culture and newsrooms generally on the notion of the “crusading journalist”, who helps to right wrongs and acts as a brake on untrammelled power, it would seem natural for journalists to focus on such ideals in a time of unusual challenges that a trauma event on the scale of the Canterbury earthquake can present. What this study shows is advocacy is a role journalists feel they should embrace when the circumstances demand it. For most, the role of advocating for people was very satisfying - “real journalism” that helps people, as one study participant said - rather than covering meetings and the other minutiae of routine work. Christchurch journalists’ desire to advocate for the community is connected to a greater sense of empathy for those they were reporting on, which stems from a collective experience of the event. The disaster prompted journalists to a higher level of empathy for members of the public than they’d previously held. As such, they often felt like counsellors hearing out people. Does an increased sense of empathy in such a traumatic situation have wider implications for day-to-day journalistic practice? Their answer, based on the results of this study, is yes. When the feeling of empathy is at its highest, in the immediate post-disaster period, then journalists were more likely, by their own account, to tread carefully with interviewees and victims. Their news judgement was refocused on supporting and helping their community. That sense of empathy can feed,

for most respondents, an increased desire to advocate for individuals. It could be suggested such a position stems from the journalists sharing a “common cause” with other earthquake victims, but that might be extending the point too far with regard to interpreting what participants in this study actually said. Certainly, journalists have a renewed sense of commonality with their audience, which is significant given the wider sense among traditional media journalists, and those in this study, that the industry is struggling to keep a connection with its audience in a diversified online world. What this study showed is journalists felt their work was more worthwhile and meaningful because of a closer relationship with the public. Although Christchurch journalists prioritised the public when making decisions about framing and news selection, most gave thought to what that meant for their perceived traditional role as “objective” or detached observers of events. They managed to negotiate this professional practice conundrum by citing their greater connection to the community, the importance of their own experience of the disaster, which allowed them to report more as concerned residents, and the need for their news stories to provide reassurance to city residents.

Christchurch journalists told the story of a dreadful event for their community in a way they believed served the public interest. Simpson & Côté (2006) believe it is possible for journalists to tell the stories of life’s worst moments in a way that still serves the public interest by adhering to long-held reporting values including accuracy, fairness and keeping the goal of the public good at the forefront. In doing this in a careful and thoughtful manner, with respect for those directly affected by trauma, journalists can help bring a community together, which is a kind of advocacy journalism (Joseph 2011/2013). Christchurch journalists strived to report on what they felt could help their community recover, which reflected a collective concern and understanding of the trauma people had experienced. Only later, when that relationship started to revert to a “them and us” situation with the public as the sense of empathy reduced, did frame use

reflect a position closer to the pre-earthquake period. The content analysis results showed that although the advocacy frame was used more frequently post-earthquake its strength was relatively consistent throughout, which indicates journalists did remain, to some extent, within the strictures of journalism practice calling for impartiality, fairness and balance. This does not contradict the earlier points that journalists became more involved, but rather shows they can do so while still retaining notions of what gives their news reports credibility - biased and unbalanced reporting will destroy that quickly.

Lessons for journalism practice

A majority of the journalists in this study experienced a surge in professional satisfaction after the earthquake because they felt they were doing important, vital work. This feeling originates from having a greater understanding of the audience's needs. Because they shared their community's experience of trauma, Christchurch journalists believed they were ideally placed to help them recover. Their increased attachment to the audience motivated them to advocate for people and help them recover from the event. Of course, that level of satisfaction and passion was not the same for all participants and some found that it faded quickly. In some cases, the passion the event stirred in journalists pushed them toward frustration months after the event because they felt they were no longer able to help the people who needed it most.

How can news outlets sustain the kind of motivation and focus on journalistic ideals that the earthquake prompted? That's a difficult question to answer within the confines of this study, but it would be an area for research as media outlets struggle to maintain a connection with diversified audiences in today's online world. What this research shows is that when journalists had a closer relationship with their audience it gave them a greater sense of purpose. The implication for reporters in general is that it might be time to aim for a stronger attachment to the people and issues they are writing

about, rather than keeping a distance between them in a bid to maintain traditional notions of objectivity. Haas and Steiner (2006) noted a different idea of the public was required to help journalists develop more complex understanding of their communities. This research shows that when Christchurch journalists shared an experience of trauma with their community they developed a different reporting focus linked to an understanding of what would help people.

Notably, the interview results indicate that for many journalists this changed reporting practice was in some way helping them personally, and their audience, to make sense of the new reality they shared. Of course, this level of attachment raises concerns about whether journalists are blinded to other issues because of their singular focus and whether their work is slanted by an over-zealous approach to advocacy, which is something that Bell's (1998) work on journalism of attachment has criticised. Some of the journalists in this study were aware of the problem of being too attached to the earthquake story, but more than a year on from the disaster it dominated their daily work. The shared experience of trauma with their audience prompted reporters to consider new ways of telling the story - less dependence on officials, greater empathy for people and frequent reference to advocacy and notions of the public good - which if applied to routine news work could help restore a connection with local communities of interest.

This study shows that after a traumatic event like the Christchurch earthquake there will be an initial period where journalistic practice is subject to measurable change. The content analysis results confirmed much of what journalists said in their interviews did flow into their work, especially in the six weeks after February 22. After the disaster their source use changed. Sources with no affiliations were used in stories in greater numbers providing increased diversity of comment. Using more sources is an indicator journalists were working harder.

Does the use of more unaffiliated voices simply reflect journalists' source use changed in the disaster period because the stories at this time were mostly about people's experiences? I believe that is too simple a suggestion. The content analysis showed there was a connection between what journalists said in their interviews about feeling a greater attachment to people and wanting to ensure their problems were heard and the sources they used. The earthquake affected the way journalists treated sources as there was a growing antipathy for officialdom, for example, and more openness to the experience of individuals, which was noted in the case story of *Press* editor Andrew Holden. What changed was reporters were more willing to regard individuals as credible sources. Journalists noted they spent longer interviewing people and felt more akin to counsellors because they wanted to hear people's stories. The type of stories they told and the kind of information they published changed to focus on helping the community to a greater extent.

The use of sources returned to a more normal relationship in the last coding period, which is consistent with what many participants had said in their interviews about the feeling of closeness with the public changing over time. However, the attitude towards officialdom was different, and journalists, the interviews showed, believed they were more questioning of those in positions of institutional power.

The changes to journalistic practice, this study shows, will not endure. First, as time passes, that overwhelming feeling of a community sharing the same experiences will change. On a simple level, for example, for many people living in the west of Christchurch life returned to normal more quickly than those living in the more damaged eastern suburbs (fewer homes and streets were damaged, essential services were restored more quickly). As that initial period of intense shared experience dissipated as individuals faced different challenges, journalists faced competing pressures about what to report. In such circumstances, they reverted to their time-tested method of remaining more detached to determine what is newsworthy and what is not.

Maybe, this can be attributed to journalists being more authoritative about the issues of the day, which allowed them to be more selective.

Second, once the initial disaster relief and clean-up period ended in Christchurch, large bureaucracies were established in the city to deal with a slew of complex and difficult issues relating to the rebuild and recovery. Those issues ranged from highly technical insurance battles to the complexities of land zoning and home repairs and encompassed a bevy of associated problems. During the recovery phase large bureaucracies, including the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority, the Central City Development Unit and the Earthquake Commission, took a prominent role in the city alongside a raft of large insurance companies and infrastructure firms including Fletchers. Residents' lobby groups were also formed to campaign on various issues. In such circumstances, the information journalists required to check stories, even if they were about an individual's battle over their house repairs, routinely required obtaining material from one of the many large institutions dealing with the recovery. It could be argued that it would be natural to depend to a greater extent on these large bureaucracies in the recovery period, but the key point is journalists' attitudes to officials did change and they felt compelled to hold them to account on behalf of readers, thereby creating a greater sense of antagonism between them. So, such, their news selection was tilted towards helping their audience to a greater degree.

Third, any list of news values will include reference to an event being unique or novel (Tuchman, 1978, Hjavard, 2002). The Canterbury earthquake was unique for the local reporters who covered it because of its severity, their personal connection to it and the experience they shared with other victims. Over time, as indicated by the interviews, that novelty wore off and earthquake reporting became the "norm". Reporting an event for such a long time must have some cumulative impact on a journalists' desire to keep doing so and influence their news selection and use of sources. For example, a reporter might have done half a dozen previous stories on people battling insurance companies

over their homes - whether the enthusiasm for doing so over many months can be maintained is questionable. Amanda South noted this in her case study - there is a point where a journalist is not hearing anything new. The content analysis results showed that in 2012 the number of earthquake stories published had dropped, source use had returned to pre-earthquake levels, and the use of journalistic frames was heading for pre-quake levels, highlighting that journalists had returned to a more routine news practice.

The influence of collective trauma waned and journalistic practice was returning to a routine mode, which is natural given the emergency and stress of the disaster event had passed. What the above highlights is an interaction between the event, the journalist's role, newsroom practices and the community. No one of these stands alone as an explanation, but they are all refracted through a sense of shared trauma. The framework of collective trauma gains its relevance by recognising these factors and the feedback loop which exists between them.

This research shows journalists faced a complex situation after the February 22 earthquake provided them with a series of unusual challenges because of their involvement in the event itself. Their professional practices and conventions were altered after the disaster, but they were not abandoned altogether. Collective trauma can provide a framework that helps us understand the influences on journalistic practices after a disaster on the scale of the February 22 earthquake because of its focus on a shared experience between reporters and their community. Conversely, those reporters who came from elsewhere to report the event did not share that experience of collective trauma, at least to the same extent, and their approach was considered inappropriate by many of the respondents in this study.

Future research

This research adds to the understanding of how journalists are affected by a major trauma event, but there are areas for further scholarship. First, it would be useful to know exactly how the audience viewed the media. Did their attitudes change in line with those expressed by the journalists in this study with regard to the closer connection reporters initially felt? Such research would provide a fuller picture of what happened after the earthquake and would prove invaluable information for media organisations trying to strengthen a connection with their audience. Measuring readership levels and conducting focus groups about what the audience liked and disliked about the coverage would also provide interesting insights. For example, did members of the audience feel the coverage focused too much on particular problems/issues? Was it too negative for too long? These kinds of questions would provide interesting answers for news media about what news people want after a disaster and role news organisations can play in the collective responses. A content analysis of television and radio news items would provide a clear understanding of how different media covered the event, and it might be useful to compare *The Press*' coverage of the earthquake to that of a newspaper based in another New Zealand city. It would also provide greater insight into statements by those broadcasters who worked in Christchurch bureau offices for national networks about the different priorities those news outlets had.

The author considered studying the experience of those journalists from outside of Christchurch who arrived to cover the event, but for reasons of lack of resource and time, this did not happen. Such research could provide an interesting comparison between the experiences of local reporters and those from elsewhere and further test the idea of collective trauma and its influence. Did reporters from elsewhere feel any differently in terms of how they approached their coverage of the event? A longitudinal study would help to clearly identify at which point the February

earthquake ceases to influence journalists' practices. In five years will there be a complete return to normality? New Zealand newsrooms, traditionally, turn over staff regularly. At what point does a change in personnel mean that shared experience with the audience is severed altogether? Finally, any qualitative research is open to criticism that its results can be, to a degree, pre-determined by the method developed by the scholar. However, the tests for reliability used for the content analysis show the author strived for a method that could be replicated.

I need to acknowledge the impact the earthquake has had my own journalism practice. I am now back in the newsroom news editing and chief reporting for *The Press* newspaper. This study has convinced me reporters should seek a closer engagement with their audience because it is more rewarding for them. They feel like they are doing worthwhile work when they are helping people understand issues they also care about. Doing so will not necessarily tear down a commitment to impartiality and fairness, but rather it should be seen as a means of enlivening their news selection and choice of sources. Creating an alternate discussion advocating less detachment and more empathy for journalists' story subjects, especially with people in trauma, is not necessarily an assault on traditional notions of objectivity or journalistic ethics. Detachment can introduce bias of its own, and in a time when media organisations are struggling to maintain their connection with their audiences it would seem news reporting must reflect local communities and their diversity to a greater extent. For example, *The Press* recently ran a series of stories about poverty in the city. Those stories struck a raw nerve with readers and those journalists writing them because the articles were about things that truly mattered, ensuring people had homes, food and money to keep their families afloat. And because they were stories about a "collective" us they created a sense of commonality. I also believe newsroom cultures must change more to recognise journalists do not simply put to one side events that are emotionally draining and traumatic for them. Where, in the past, I might have shrugged

my shoulders and dismissed a journalist as not being tough enough to deal with a difficult story I can now see how different people are affected by the work they are asked to do.

Finally, I hope my study has allowed the reader a snapshot of what Christchurch journalists faced in their earthquake reporting. This study's value stems from the account journalists provided. They were narratives laced with important messages for other reporters who will one day face similar circumstances.

Appendix 1

Coding questions for newspaper frames

Story # _____ Date _____ Newspaper _____

Indicate 1 for Yes, 0 for No.

Reporter as advocate frame: does the story suggest it is the media's role to advocate for readers and help them find solutions to problems?

Does the story (includes photo and caption) suggest problems with the quake response (city wide or regard to individuals, their personal/property and business need); Does the story suggest ways to help a family, group and community solve an issue/problem; Does the story call for international help; Does the story suggest officials are not helping people/performing and wrongly restricting access to parts of the city or withholding information; Does the story suggest officials are taking the right course of action for the community/city?

Journalists are personally part of the story: stories suggest that reporters cannot separate their own experiences from the story they are covering.

Does the story use personal pronouns when mentioning the reporter/media outlet; is the reporter/photographer mentioned in the story; is the reporter's family/friends/colleagues/ mentioned in the story; does the story include a photo of the reporter/photographer; is the story embedded in emotional discourse about the reporter's experiences (for example use of emotive adjectives)?

Journalists are attached to audience: stories suggest a strong bond between journalists and their audience, reflecting the notion reporters have a greater

understanding for what the public/people of Christchurch experience. The stories will emphasise the human and emotional aspect of an issue and a bond with sources.

Does the story detail the personal experiences/lives of those in the article; does the story contain visual content or use comments that generate feelings of outrage, empathy, sympathy caring, or compassion for actors/victims; does the story suggest shared community values (for example caring/helping people who are worse off/solidarity/stoicism/can do attitude); does the story suggest the media/journalists are part of the community; does the story use euphemisms to describe death/injury/suffering; does the story use emotional adjectives/discourse to describe people's reactions to events/issues; does the story use the possessive pronoun "our" with regard to the city/community/neighbourhood? ; does the story suggest outside media created problems?

Ethics: Stories suggest journalists' faced decisions about how to act, personally or professionally, when covering a news story.

Appendix 2

SOURCING INDEX

Source # 1 2 3 4 5

Indicate 1 for Yes, 0 for No.

Source Affiliation:

Government

City council

Overseas Government

Affiliated NZ citizen

Unaffiliated NZ Citizen

Foreign Citizen

Other

Agency/Institution Type:

Governmental

Corporate/Business

Non-governmental/non-profit

Rescue/emergency services

Education

Civic

Other

None

Source Status:

Executive/business owner

Spokesman (also Legal Representative)

Worker/Employee

Position not specified

Victim

Eyewitness

Ordinary/Common man ("Average Man/Woman on the Street)

Perpetrator

Other

Appendix 3

HUMAN ETHICS COMMITTEE

Secretary, Lynda Griffioen

Email: human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz

Ref: HEC 2012/39

May 2012

Sean Scanlon
143 Weston RD
Christchurch

Dear Sean

The Human Ethics Committee advises that your research proposal “Quake aftermath: Christchurch- based journalists' experiences of reporting in a disaster zone and the implications for news judgement and relationships with sources” has been considered and approved.

Please note that this approval is subject to the incorporation of the amendments you have provided in your email of 30 April 2012. Best wishes for your project. Yours sincerely



*University of Canterbury
Human Ethics Committee
chair*

Michael Grimshaw

University of Canterbury Private Bag 4800, Christchurch 8140, New Zealand.
www.canterbury.ac.nz

Appendix 4

Interviewees and dates (all 2012):

Olivia Carville, The Press, junior reporter,	May 17
Hamish Clark, TV3, senior reporter,	May 8
Glenn Conway, The Press, chief reporter,	May 15
Emily Cooper, CTV/Radio Live, junior reporter,	May 4
Juanita Copeland, ex TV3, reporter,	May 30
Phil Corkery, TV3, bureau chief	May 28
Richard Cosgrove, The Press, illustrations editor	May 15
JournalistA	May 22
Paul Gorman, The Press, associate editor	May 21
Rachel Graham, RNZ, senior reporter	June 5
Marc Greenhill, The Press, reporter	May 22
Jeff Hampton, TV3, senior reporter	May 8
David Hallett, The Press, photographer	May 16
Kamala Hayman, The Press, digital editor	May 18
Kirk Hargreaves, The Press, photographer	May 16
Andrew Holden, The Press, editor	May 15
John Kirk Anderson, The Press, photographer	May 17
Coen Lammers, The Press, deputy editor in 2011	May 23
Keith Lynch, The Press, deputy chief reporter	May 17
JournalistB	May 11
Iain McGregor, The Press, photographer	May 16
Joe Morgan, freelance cameraman	May 7
Joy Reid, One News, reporter	June 1
Sam Sachdeva, The Press, reporter	May 18
Don Scott, The Press, photographer	May 16
Joanne Scott, Newstalk ZB, reporter	May 18
Amanda South, Newstalk ZB, reporter	May 8
Ric Stevens, The Press, deputy editor	May 15
Georgina Stylianou, The Press, reporter	May 21
Dan Tobin, The Press, videographer	May 17
Martin van Beynen, The Press, senior writer	April 24
Vicki-Wilkinson Baker, One News, reporter	May 14
Michael Wright, The Press, reporter	May 21

Appendix 5

Interview question sheet

Name:

Age:

Sex:

Title:

Work experience:

Organisation:

Round:

Medium:

Questions:

- 1) What are your key memories of February 22nd ?
- 2) How much independence did you have to pick the stories you did and their angles?
- 3) Do you think news editors had the right news priorities? What were those priorities and what are they now?
- 4) What stories/photos are you most proud of and why?
- 5) Do you approach news stories differently now?
- 6) How has your home and personal life been affected - what effect has this had on your news selection and what you write about?
- 7) How did you cope?
- 8) Did the quakes change how you interviewed/dealt with victims/friends/family?
- 9) Has your use of sources changed?
- 10) Has the way you approach your round changed since the quakes?
- 11) Has your view of journalists'/newspaper's role in society changed?

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